

The Brooklyn Paper

Brooklyn's Real Newspaper

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BATTLE OVER ARENA ... BAGELS

Business changes name

THE OPPONENTS OF ATLANTIC YARDS are so frustrated by Bruce Ratner and his high-priced pals that they're taking out their aggression on a lowly bagel store owner. Just a few hours after bagel man Ravi Aggarwal hung an "Arena Bagels and Bialys" sign on his soon-to-open Fifth Avenue shop, opponents of the basketball stadium that inspired the name made their feelings clear: they planned to protest outside Aggarwal's store if it remained "Arena Bagels."

Aggarwal initially told this bagel-loving scribe that he would never relent to such bullying — but as more and more potential customers dropped by to express their concerns about buying their morning coffee and bialy at a place named "Arena," he ultimately caved.

"In the end, I had to change my mind," said Aggarwal. "I can't do anything that goes against the neighborhood because I'm a neighborhood guy. These are my customers and I can't go against them."

So there it is, folks: An immigrant from Punjab — a guy who worked himself up from a dishwasher to a manager to, finally, the owner of bagel stores in Queens, Long Island and Brooklyn — is gunned

down in the war over Atlantic Yards. It started innocently enough: Aggarwal told The Brooklyn Paper that he wanted to link his new shop to the basketball arena that is slated to rise just a block and a half up Fifth Avenue.

"For me, naming it 'Arena' was all about location," he said. "I just knew I wanted to come to Brooklyn with my bagels, which are the best, by the way. I don't know anything about the Atlantic Yards project."

He quickly got an education about the mega-project — and the negative passions it provokes in some. From the moment the sign went up this week, people started complaining — and some were openly hostile, he said.

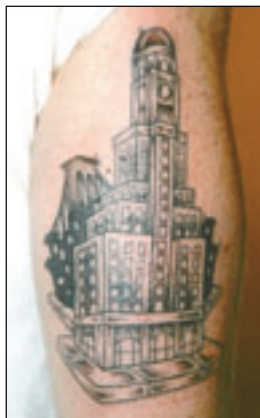
"At first, I said, 'No way. I'm not going to be pushed around,'" Aggarwal said. "But that steadfast conviction didn't last long. Aggarwal said the sign would come down on Thursday — after this issue went to press. His other stores are named 'Slim's Bagels,' so he said it's likely that he'll name the Fifth Avenue store 'Brooklyn Slim's.'"

See **ARENA BAGELS** on page 16

THE BROOKLYN
ANGLE By Gersh Kuntzman
EXCLUSIVE



HOLY BAGEL! Arena Bagels at 55 Fifth Ave. was the first business near Atlantic Yards to take its name from Bruce Ratner's mega-development, but owner Ravi Aggarwal has decided to change the name due to threats of a boycott of the yet-to-be-opened store.



ON THE ARM: This design of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank building is a popular Brooklyn tattoo.

Tattoo youse Brooklyn icons getting some ink

By Ariella Cohen

The Brooklyn Paper
People love Brooklyn's brownstones, but one woman is now wearing her love on her sleeve — or, more accurately, under it, in the form of a brownstone tattoo.

Last week, Manisha Montemurro became the proud owner of what could be the first-ever brownstone tattoo, a six-inch black-ink rendering of the century-old Henry Street building she calls home.

The brownstone image — pedestals, cornices, wrought-iron fence and all — needles on her right scapula, between a larger tattoo of a red rose and one of a ghostly angel (pictured on page 16).

"I got the rose for my mom, an angel for my grandmother. I needed something else," said Montemurro, a Brooklyn Heights resident.

People have been inking their flesh with the symbols of their culture since the days when needles were made of fish bones. The technology has (thankfully) advanced, but the basic idea has remained the same: people want to put their passions on display.

And now, like a skull and crossbones, the red, white and blue face of Old Glory or the silhouette of the Empire State Building, the brownstone has become an object of "intimate significance," according to Mike McCabe, au-

thor of "New York City Tattoo: The Oral History of an Urban Art."

"New York City tattoos [are] a total grab bag of cross-cultural and pan-national references," he said. "After 9-11, the World Trade Center was very popular. The Katz's deli sign is popular, the Empire State Building, the Statue of Liberty, the brownstone is a new one."

Montemurro said that her architecturally inspired tattoo was a reminder of her father, a building restorer who bought 275 Henry St., the year she was born, as well as the "old soul" of the fast-changing borough she grew up in.

"I love the way that brownstones are beautiful, but also really comfortable ... like Brooklyn has been throughout my life," she said.

Montemurro's rite of urban passage took place on a recent Friday at Brooklyn Tattoo, a popular ink shop on Atlantic Avenue near Hicks Street.

The shop's owner, Adam Gould, said Montemurro was the first customer who asked for a tattoo of a brownstone — but the homegrown tattoo artist believes that she won't be the last.

Indeed, he has already reserved a piece of his forearm for a rendering of the Carroll Gardens brownstone where he grew up.

The Tompkins Place house will need to be See **BROOKLYN TATTOOS** on page 16



Say Fey!
Park Slope welcomed "30 Rock" creator and star Tina Fey to Seventh Avenue to film scenes for her forthcoming movie, "Baby Mama."

HARD CELLS

Plan could put condos at jail

By Ariella Cohen

A luxury condo developer says he wants to build residential towers on each side of the Brooklyn House of Detention — a bold salvo in his bid to win redevelopment rights at the soon-to-reopen jail.

Last week, the Bloomberg administration solicited bids to transform the House of D into a mixed-use penal facility.

Two towers — consisting of condos, office space, a hotel, or any combination — could be built alongside the Atlantic Avenue jail under the city plan. And the proximity of the inmates to the tenants isn't deterring developer Joel Walentas.

"It's a valuable piece of real estate and I don't think the jail is a huge issue," Walentas, son of DUMBO developer David Walentas, told The Brooklyn Paper this week. He said his company would propose "a residential building next to" the jail.

Walentas added that "if the project is done right," apartments in the resulting "House of D" condos could attract the same wealthy tenants as the Court House, a posh 320-unit building that Walentas's Two Trees Management built one block from the jail.

Walentas made his bold pronouncement last Friday, one day after the city's Economic Development Corporation officially asked developers to submit plans for two 10- to 15-story commercial and/or residential towers that would sandwich the existing 11-story jail at the rapidly gentrifying corner of Atlantic Avenue and Smith Street.

The towers could be filled with offices, hotel rooms or apartments, according to the city's pitch, Walentas said that he would consider building there only if it was guaranteed that he could do a residential development, which would likely be more profitable than the alternatives.

Along with new towers, the House of Detention complex would include a 22,000-square-foot underground parking garage for city workers and hundreds of new cells for the jail, which has been closed since 2003.

Diagrams distributed to interested developers suggest that the new cells would rise See **JAILHOUSES** on page 5

Ridge heavyweight wants to be big loser

By Matthew Lysiak

A larger-than-life local figure is about to lower his profile — by a few hundred pounds, hopefully.

Bay Ridge resident Will Millender, 26, is embarking on a 10-week, 550-mile walk from Boston to Washington as part of a new reality show in which 12 super-sized contestants lose weight to win cash.

"I can't tell you much about it now, but I am hoping the next time you see me, that you will be seeing a lot less," Millender said last Thursday, the day before he left to begin filming of ABC's six-episode series, "Fat March," which is based on the British reality show, "Too Fat to Walk."

It is the latest variation among TV weight-loss shows, but unlike "The

Biggest Loser" and "Celebrity Fit Club" — where contestants battle each other — the goal of the "Fat March" is to become one big hand of brothers.

If they stay together by the end of the walk, they share the \$1.2-million pot — but every time someone drops out, or is voted out for slowing the others down, the pot is reduced by \$100,000.

But the ripping Ridge resident is looking for more than big money and his 15-minutes of fame; Millender (right) is looking to change his life.

"I know I need to do something about my weight," said Millender, who tips the scales at well, he wouldn't say. "You just don't see a lot of older people my size walking around, and it doesn't take a genius to figure out why."

The show, which will be broadcast in August, has already taken a toll on Millender. During a pre-show taping, he



fainted and was sent to the hospital. After seriously considering dropping out, Millender, a Kingsborough Community College student, was convinced to keep going by the show's physical trainers, who are also the hosts. (Turns out, it was just a low-blood-sugar thing. After Millender was checked out, he was cleared to continue.)

Surviving "Fat March" isn't the first step to changing his life, only the latest, according to Millender's girlfriend of two years Erin O'Keefe.

"Over the past two years he's gone from working retail with no ambition to going to college, making the Dean's List," said O'Keefe. "It has been a tremendous life-changing few years for him."

Trial, tribulations, and even a slice of celebrity are nothing new for Millender, who has battled his weight for

several years, and whose image can still be found on storefront posters across Ridge for his first place showing at the Fifth Avenue pizza-eating contest last June at Rocco's Pizzeria (Millender was cheered to victory by a huge crowd that included a once-legendary, now-slimmed-down, caterer, Borough President Markowitz).

He ate 10 slices in the regulation 12 minutes. The performance made him a legend.

"We had about 2,000 people cheering him on," said contest host Joseph Lociceno. "If he can walk as well as he eats pizza, he should win that contest, too."

O'Keefe says that Millender's march is bigger than any one man, and could set a healthy example for millions.

"This is a once in a lifetime experience — he is going to get healthy and win cash," said O'Keefe.

Filthy puppets on stage at St. Ann's



Pitter Pat is one of seven puppets interviewed by Toni Schlesinger (left) at St. Ann's Warehouse.

By Chris Varnum

They drink, smoke, they curse. One, a Puerto Rican grandmother, defiantly shuns underwear. Another, a sphere-headed butler named Pitter Pat, admits to frequenting prostitutes.

Now here are some sock puppets who are ready for prime time!

Beginning May 30 at St. Ann's Warehouse in DUMBO, these puppets and a slew of their ilk will take the stage for the 10th anniversary of Puppet Lab.

The show's star, New York Observer columnist Toni Schlesinger, will channel Charlie Rose and do sit-down interviews with a memorable puppet from the series' past. She plans to be tough on her subjects, she told GO Brooklyn, and won't shrink from blinding interviews with projected video clips from past performances.

So what is it about puppets? "You sort of forget they're objects," Schlesinger said. "It really is almost like they're real people."

Under the direction of Puppet Lab co-director Dan Hurlin and David Neumann, Lab artists and their collaborators meet weekly over nine months to develop projects. Each spring, St. Ann's Warehouse presents a mini-festival of New Puppet Theater from the Lab.

Schlesinger's lively imagination and unique background — she's written and performed in a number of shows, some with live humans — gives her a unique approach to the puppet interview. With Pitter Pat, who's written a tell-all memoir entitled "Out of the Sock," she engages in literary conversation. With others, she gets into more provocative subjects — puppet discrimination, a debate on Spanish Harlem's gentrification with the commanding abuela and a discussion of the Iraq war with an ancient Greek warrior.

"There really is a human behind every puppet, whether it's the person who made it or the person controlling it," said Schlesinger. "It's not like I walk around talking to statues and vases."

Other works in the series include "Dear Meme," a marionette play set to music performed by the Kronos Quartet; "Billy-Club Man," an exploration of the life of the Spanish Panch as he appears in the puppet plays of Federico Garcia Lorca and as he is imagined onstage; and "The Lester of Tonga," an erotic traveltogue about the last true monarchy in the world, the Kingdom of Tonga.

"Labapalooza" will run from May 30 through June 3 at St. Ann's Warehouse (38 Water St., at Dock Street in DUMBO). Tickets are \$20. For information, call (718) 254-8779 or visit www.stannarehouse.org.

JUDGE PHILLIPS FREED!



The Brooklyn Paper
Six years after he was declared mentally incompetent under murky circumstances, and two years after he had been locked down in a Bronx nursing home, former Civil Court Judge John Phillips was finally freed to move into a Park Slope assisted living facility on Wednesday.

At about 4:30 p.m., a burgundy sedan pulled up in front of Castle Senior Living at 1 Prospect Park West, and Phillips, a former borough resident, got out and surveyed his new digs (see photo at left).

"It feels good. It feels like home," he said.

It's not quite Phillips's native Bedford-Stuyvesant, but it's a far cry from his residence of the last two years: a dingy Bronx nursing home that his lawyer Ezra Glaser described as a place "where people go to die."

Phillips's has been meandering through a labyrinth — both physical and legal — since 2001, when the Brooklyn District Attorney's office declared him incompetent, expressing concern that his then-considerable assets would fall prey to unscrupulous hangers-on. Since then, Phillips, now 84, has actually been at the mercy of court-appointed guardians, including a lawyer who admitted to taking at least \$187,000 from Phillips's estate.

Phillips's move to Brooklyn may be a "milestone," but Glaser said more work remains to be done, including "unraveling over" the missing money so that the former millionaire can make ends meet.

Dana Rubinstein

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EDITORS' PICKS

SATURDAY
May 19

SUNDAY
May 20

MONDAY
May 21

WEDNESDAY
May 23

THURSDAY
May 24

Cheap chow

Though the traditional gift for a 20th anniversary is china, San Loco, the Mexican restaurant chain, is shaking things up this year and giving customers something more useful: 20-cent tacos. All day long, the tasty snacks are going to be served at the discounted price, which leaves you plenty of cash left over for the house-made margaritas and tasty pumpkin flan.

Beginning at 11 am at San Loco (160 N. 4th St. at Driggs Avenue in Williamsburg). For information, call (718) 218-8479 or visit www.sanloco.com.



French 'Maids'

Tonight, director Christopher Miles' 1974 version of "The Maids" will be screening. One of Jean Genet's best-loved plays, this story finds two maids taking turns pretending to be their employer. Think of it as water cooler chatter for the crossdressing domestic set.

4:30 pm, 6:50 pm and 9:15 pm at BAM Rose Cinemas (30 Lafayette Ave. at Ashland Place in Fort Greene). Tickets are \$10. For information, call (718) 636-4100 or visit www.bam.org.



Slam funk

See and Be Scene kicks off Memorial Day week-end early with their annual "Funk-a-thon" at Galapagos. With live performances by Brooklyn's own Batarats (pictured), soul band Becca's Brew and Pennsylvania import Philadelphia Slick, the party is bound to be hotter than the weather.

10 pm at Galapagos Art Space (70 N. 6th Street at Wythe Avenue in Williamsburg). Free. For information, call (718) 384-4588 or visit www.galapagosartspace.com.



Another kind of mother

Check out Brooklyn Reading Works' "Eddy Mother's Event," featuring moms — and one brave dad — reading from their work. Novelists, including Amy Sohn (pictured), will share their stories, but the most popular person in the room might be the bartender — the price of admission includes free drinks.

8 pm at the Old Stone House (Fifth Avenue between 3rd and 4th streets in Park Slope). \$5. For information, visit www.brooklynreadingworks.com.



NINE DAYS IN BROOKLYN

Compiled by Susan Rosenthal Jay

SAT, MAY 19

OUTDOORS AND TOURS

IT'S MY PARK DAY: Volunteers are needed to clean up Prospect Park. All participants receive a free t-shirt and other goodies. All ages welcome. 10 am to 1 pm. Meet at Ocean and Parkside avenues. (718) 965-8960. Free.

SONJA STUDIO STROLL: South of the Navy Yard, Sonja Studio is an eight-acre studio and featuring studio tours and works of nearly 100 artists at over 40 venues. Noon to 6 pm. For info, visit www.sonjastudio.com. Free.

STUDIO TOUR: 15th annual Park Slope tour. Over 45 artists open their doors and invite the public to see works in progress from established and emerging artists. Self-guided tour. Noon to 4 pm. Downloadable map at www.bwac.org. Free.

PEDAL BOATING: Cruise Brooklyn's freshwater lake in a pedal boat. \$15 for one hour, plus \$10 refundable deposit. Noon to 5 pm. Enter Prospect Park at the Parkside and Ocean Avenue entrances. www.prospectpark.org.

NEIGHBORHOOD SERIES: Visit Fort Greene. Join the Urban Park Rangers, and discover the unique characteristics and essence of Fort Greene's neighborhood. Wear comfortable walking shoes, bring water and dress for the weather. 1 pm to 3 pm. Visitor's Center near the Myrtle Avenue and Washington Park Entrance. Call 311 and ask for the Urban Park Rangers. Free.

GREENWOOD CEMETERY: Jeff Richman leads the tour "Battle Hill and Back." Tour features resting place of Leonard Bernstein, Fannie the Dog, Minerva, the highest point in Brooklyn and more. \$10. \$5 for Historic Fund members. 1 pm. Meet at 25th Street and Fifth Avenue. (631) 584-0971.

FORT GREENE TOUR: Like a Native tours two key neighborhoods of row houses and mansions. \$15. 1:30 pm to 4 pm. Call for meeting location. (718) 393-7527.

RED HOOK TOUR: Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment takes a tour of the neighborhood. Francis Monroe leads. \$13. \$15 members. \$8 seniors and students. 2 pm to 4 pm. Meet at corner of Columbia and Canal streets. (718) 788-8500.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, BROOKLYN BRIDGE: Adventure on a Shouting celebrates Brooklyn Bridge's 124th birthday. Learn about the historical facts and legends about the bridge. \$5. 3 pm. Meet in front of the Municipal Building at the corner of Chambers and Centre streets, Lower Manhattan. (212) 265-5663.

PERFORMANCE

BARGE MUSIC: Classical music concert features a matinee concert of music by Schubert, \$30, \$15 students. Noon. Also, evening program features music by Vivaldi, and others. Knights Chamber Orchestra performs. 7:30 pm. \$25-\$25 students. Ferry Landing, Old Fulton Street at the East River. (718) 818-8363.

RECITAL: Opera Project presents tenor Josh Carr. Recital features music of Respighi, Lotti, Telemann, Schubert, and Liszt. 7:30 pm. \$10. 2 pm. Meet at 25th Street and Fifth Avenue. (718) 636-0591. Free.

BAM: Brooklyn Academy of Music presents "Doug Varone and Dances," a dance work by choreographer Doug Varone. \$20 to \$45. 7:30 pm. Hecy Theatre. (651) 100-4100.

OPERA: Company of Brooklyn performs Giovanni's "Roméo et Juliette." Private brownstone home in Harlem. \$25. 7:30 pm. Call for location and reservations. (212) 567-3283.

SPRING CONCERT: Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra presents "Love and Poetry," featuring works by Brahms. 7:30 pm. \$5.

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SAT, MAY 19

OUTDOORS AND TOURS

IT'S MY PARK DAY: Volunteers are needed to clean up Prospect Park. All participants receive a free t-shirt and other goodies. All ages welcome. 10 am to 1 pm. Meet at Ocean and Parkside avenues. (718) 965-8960. Free.

SONJA STUDIO STROLL: South of the Navy Yard, Sonja Studio is an eight-acre studio and featuring studio tours and works of nearly 100 artists at over 40 venues. Noon to 6 pm. For info, visit www.sonjastudio.com. Free.

STUDIO TOUR: 15th annual Park Slope tour. Over 45 artists open their doors and invite the public to see works in progress from established and emerging artists. Self-guided tour. Noon to 4 pm. Downloadable map at www.bwac.org. Free.

PEDAL BOATING: Cruise Brooklyn's freshwater lake in a pedal boat. \$15 for one hour, plus \$10 refundable deposit. Noon to 5 pm. Enter Prospect Park at the Parkside and Ocean Avenue entrances. www.prospectpark.org.

NEIGHBORHOOD SERIES: Visit Fort Greene. Join the Urban Park Rangers, and discover the unique characteristics and essence of Fort Greene's neighborhood. Wear comfortable walking shoes, bring water and dress for the weather. 1 pm to 3 pm. Visitor's Center near the Myrtle Avenue and Washington Park Entrance. Call 311 and ask for the Urban Park Rangers. Free.

GREENWOOD CEMETERY: Jeff Richman leads the tour "Battle Hill and Back." Tour features resting place of Leonard Bernstein, Fannie the Dog, Minerva, the highest point in Brooklyn and more. \$10. \$5 for Historic Fund members. 1 pm. Meet at 25th Street and Fifth Avenue. (631) 584-0971.

FORT GREENE TOUR: Like a Native tours two key neighborhoods of row houses and mansions. \$15. 1:30 pm to 4 pm. Call for meeting location. (718) 393-7527.

RED HOOK TOUR: Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment takes a tour of the neighborhood. Francis Monroe leads. \$13. \$15 members. \$8 seniors and students. 2 pm to 4 pm. Meet at corner of Columbia and Canal streets. (718) 788-8500.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, BROOKLYN BRIDGE: Adventure on a Shouting celebrates Brooklyn Bridge's 124th birthday. Learn about the historical facts and legends about the bridge. \$5. 3 pm. Meet in front of the Municipal Building at the corner of Chambers and Centre streets, Lower Manhattan. (212) 265-5663.

PERFORMANCE
BARGE MUSIC: Classical music concert features a matinee concert of music by Schubert, \$30, \$15 students. Noon. Also, evening program features music by Vivaldi, and others. Knights Chamber Orchestra performs. 7:30 pm. \$25-\$25 students. Ferry Landing, Old Fulton Street at the East River. (718) 818-8363.

RECITAL: Opera Project presents tenor Josh Carr. Recital features music of Respighi, Lotti, Telemann, Schubert, and Liszt. 7:30 pm. \$10. 2 pm. Meet at 25th Street and Fifth Avenue. (718) 636-0591. Free.

BAM: Brooklyn Academy of Music presents "Doug Varone and Dances," a dance work by choreographer Doug Varone. \$20 to \$45. 7:30 pm. Hecy Theatre. (651) 100-4100.

OPERA: Company of Brooklyn performs Giovanni's "Roméo et Juliette." Private brownstone home in Harlem. \$25. 7:30 pm. Call for location and reservations. (212) 567-3283.

SPRING CONCERT: Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra presents "Love and Poetry," featuring works by Brahms. 7:30 pm. \$5.

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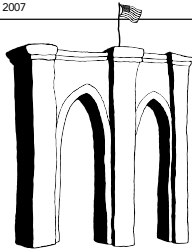
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THE stoop

BROOKLYN HEIGHTS—DOWNTOWN DUMBO

Wal-Mart is not dead yet

Is Wal-Mart phoning it in on the Fulton Mall? Some area residents felt that way this week after being asked to participate in a survey about how to improve the busy, yet underdeveloped, shopping strip.

But this was no objective study. In fact, such calls are typically made in an effort to convince the recipient one way or another, rather than to simply request an opinion.

That's how Brooklyn Heights resident Michael Bast felt after receiving the call last week.

"They asked me how I felt about having a big-box store on the mall or in Downtown Brooklyn," Bast said, adding that the survey-taker was steering him towards the notion that big-box stores would "improve" the mall.

Some people thought the calls might have come from Wal-Mart, which is known to be scouting a spot on or near the Fulton Mall.

Didn't Wal-Mart get the message when union leaders, protesters, community groups and residents converged on Albee Square in the freezing February cold to scream "No Wal-Mart" over and over into a megaphone?

Well, Wal-Mart's playing it cagey.

"We can't comment on possible projects," a Wal-Mart spokesman told me, "but I can say that we are still interested in putting a store in Brooklyn."

He did say that although Wal-Mart has conducted these kinds of surveys before, they haven't done one in a couple of years, and they aren't doing one now.

But with all the development and change happening in Downtown Brooklyn, it's not a stretch to think that other big-box stores mentioned in the survey — Bast recalled Target and Costco in particular — are keeping their eye on a future mall spot. (Calls to Target and Costco went unanswered.)

The survey could be a way of drumming up enthusiasm for such a store on the mall before doing anything official, like going to the Fulton Mall Improvement Association or Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce (of which Wal-Mart is a dues-paying member, just so you know).

Calling it "progress" and "a new plan" is a great way to make residents a little more receptive to the idea.

Not that it worked on Bast. "I told them I didn't care either way," he said.

THE KITCHEN SINK

Hallelujah! After 12 years of ongoing renovations, the scaffolding at Saint Ann's School on Pierrepont Street has finally come down. It's been up so long that residents are going to have to look twice to make sure they're in the right neighborhood when they walk past the school now. ... You can thank **Karysyan** for all the ten up streets in DUMBO lately. The gas company is installing new high-pressure lines and upgrading its services for all the new residents moving into the neighborhood. ... **Assemblywoman Jean Millman** (D-Brooklyn Heights) wants to come to the rescue of DUMBO artists who can barely afford their rent. Millman's bill to create affordable housing for artists just got a sponsor in the Senate.

E-mail us at Stoop@BrooklynPaper.com

HEIGHTS LOWDOWN



Christie Rizk

This old house: Restored!

By Christie Rizk

The Brooklyn Paper

From the Addams Family to a real family.

This Brooklyn Heights house — long abandoned and then horribly damaged in a 2004 fire — is ready to make its return to civilization, thanks to a local developer and restorer who refused to see the grand dame rot away.

The house at 135 Joralemon St. had spent the last decade in a state of genteel dilapidation, its owners unable to maintain it well, and derided by residents as "the haunted house of Brooklyn Heights," said Brooklyn Heights Association Executive Director Judy Stanton.

The house, a protected historic landmark since 1966, had fallen into disrepair, despite a city rule that requires all landmarked houses to be kept in "a state of good repair."

By 2003, Time Out New York even called it one of the 13 creepiest places in the city. "It's easy to picture Uncle Fester roaming the attic, testing light bulbs in his mouth — or Jeffrey Dahmer in the basement, dismembering corpses," the magazine said.

The Dec. 31, 2004 fire completed the house's decay (see photo left), but then the city stepped in.

"We spent a year trying to get the owner to fix up the house," said John Weiss, deputy counsel for the Landmarks Preservation Commission. The Commission even tried suing to get the owner, Alfred Palmer, to comply with the demands to fix the house.



The once-decrepit house at 135 Joralemon St., a neighborhood eyesore even before a 2004 fire (photo left), has been lovingly restored and is on the market (right).



Instead, Palmer sold the three-story house for \$2.4 million in October to Howard Haines, a local developer with a background in high-end restorations.

Haines spent seven months restoring the circa-1833 building to its former glory. "I've been wanting to do the restoration ever since I saw the place," said Haines, who lives on Garden Place. "It's been a very fulfilling project."

The 174-year-old house is unique to Brooklyn Heights, said Haines, who thinks the house was actually built in 1828.

"That's significantly old, especially for Brooklyn," he said.

Haines spent what he calls a "significant amount of money" fixing the house from top to bottom — he replaced the roof, rebuilt the sagging back porch, re-

placed the plumbing, electrical and heating systems, and renovated the kitchen and bathrooms. Palmer, who lives on Hicks Street, didn't want to comment on the new renovations.

But the neighbors approve. "I think everyone in the neighborhood was looking forward to it being restored," said Heights resident John Locantore.

Now it's on the market.

Saving DUMBO while they can

By Christie Rizk

The Brooklyn Paper

The beau monde of DUMBO gathered this week to schmooze, eat, drink ... and save the neighborhood from overdevelopment.

The DUMBO Neighborhood Association's "Town Hall" meeting on Monday centered on getting the area designated as a historic district.

"We need to do whatever we can to preserve DUMBO's unique character," said association President Karen Johnson.

The highlight of the gathering at the Powerhouse Arena on Main Street — besides the food provided by Foragers, Retreat and Forigno's, and the wine served up by 68 Jay Street bar — was filmmaker Julia Ryan's documentary "DUMBO: Then and Now," which chronicled the area's evolution from a residential area in the mid-1800s to a center of manufacturing in the 1900s, to its current residential-buildings-in-the-midst-of-

old-manufacturing incarnation, where real-estate costs are rising faster than almost any other neighborhood in Brooklyn.

The film put into pictures what the preservation of "DUMBO's character" really means — restoring the Belgian-block streets, preventing developers from tearing down unique, old factory buildings, and making sure that new buildings don't rise so high that they block the views of the bridges.

The Neighborhood Association has been lobbying to get DUMBO landmarked for several years, and the residents' efforts paid off last month when the Landmarks Preservation Commission started the process.

But the wait for protection could take up to two years, and residents are worried that developers could take advantage of the delay to tear down old buildings. In January, the Neighborhood Association sounded the alarm that a developer had started demolishing a 140-year-old building at 205 Water St. The Department of Buildings temporarily

revoked the demolition permit when residents called city officials to protest.

Councilman David Yassky, one of the local pols to make an appearance at the meeting and a staunch supporter of landmarking for DUMBO, promised to try to speed the process.

"I look forward to having a landmark district [in DUMBO] in a year and a half," said Yassky (D-Brooklyn Heights).

Some small commercial property owners might try to throw a wrench into the landmarking plan. The Neighborhood Association has heard complaints.

"There are always some landowners who oppose landmarking so they won't have to ask for permission to change their buildings, or they're being limited by the city," said Milton Hender, a resident in favor of the landmarking.

Under city rules, anyone who owns a building inside the protected district must apply before making any changes to a building's exterior.

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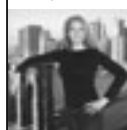
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View of the Leon Levy and Shelby White Court. Left: Marble statue of a youthful Hercules, Roman, Flavian period, A.D. 69-98. Gift of Mrs. Frederick F. Thompson, 1903. Right: Marble statue of Venus, Roman, Imperial, 1st or 2nd century A.D. Copy of a Greek statue of the 3rd or 2nd century B.C. Purchase, 1932. Both works from The Watson-Guptill Museum of Art. Photo: LaFayette Cohen/Anne Kirschner.



THE Stoop

CARROLL GARDENS-COBBLE HILL BOERUM HILL RED HOOK

Blogs ain't got reality

The candle-lit, carved wood bar on the corner of Hoyt and Bergen streets has been the unofficial living room of Boerum Hill since before the neighborhood had a name.

So last month, when an anonymous tipster posted a warning about the bar's impending closure on the foodie blog, Eater.com, people flipped out.

The online set held rambling virtual conversations about the economics of running the \$6-a-beer tavern. They mused about the possibility of a Starbucks taking over the building, a recognized historic landmark, and theorized on which beloved neighborhood institution "gentrification" would take down next.

Anxiety about the rumored change bubbled up from the blogosphere until finally, the manager, Jason Furlani, decided to stop the gossip mill at its source.

"For almost 13 years I've worked for the individuals who NOW own/operate the Brooklyn Inn ... and ... they have NO PLANS to turn it into anything other than what it is ... the Brooklyn Inn," said Furlani, a longtime resident of Carroll Gardens, in a May 4 e-missive to Eater.com.

The post was Furlani's first foray into the blogosphere, he told me over a Yuengling at the Inn this week.

"Apparently, people read that —," he said of the online forams. Like most rumors, there was a grain of truth to the gossip: the guy who ran the bar for the last decade had retired and new management took over.

Furlani maintains that the only changes planned are maintenance improvements — a paint job, new bathroom tiles, flushed beer taps.

The only change in social character could happen in the bar's red-walled backroom, a formal dining room that is now occupied by a pool table that could in the future be booted to make way for tables, a nod to the bar's speakeasy past, Furlani said.

If you ask me, the real news is how deeply the blogs have affected how we learn about our neighborhood. Food blogs have broken many a tale, most recently the tabloid-friendly story of Porchetta chef Jason Neroni. They have become 24-7 talkboxes — and word-of-mouth just doesn't work the way it used to. The chattering classes aren't at the bar anymore; they're behind a computer talking about the bar.

Although in reality, the Inn was not in danger, the rumor spread as fast as word of a key party in a high school because, well, everyone was at his computer instead of at the bar, knocking back a beer — and a shot of the truth.

THE KITCHEN SINK

B WACK: Brooklyn Waterfront Artists' Coalition opened its annual show on the Red Hook waterfront last week with an appearance by Borough President Markowitz.

"Come back to this neighborhood in 10 years, and you won't even recognize it," the prez told the crowd. Hasn't anyone told Marty that not all Hookers are so happy about that? ... Said days: The greens are fresh fruits are reasonably priced at K & Y Fruit and Vegetable, which opened this month at 291 Court St., near De-graw Street. But plenty of local vegans are gliding over the joint's name.

E-mail us at Stoop@BrooklynPaper.com



Ariella Cohen



Parks advocates want to transform the run-down Thomas Greene playground on Douglass Street into a skateboard park.

They're gleaming the Gowanus

By Ariella Cohen

The Brooklyn Paper

Brooklyn skateboard punks may get a place of their own under a new proposal to turn a long-neglected Boerum Hill park into a haven for "boarders."

The plan would transform the lightly used Thomas Greene Playground, which is on Douglass Street between Third Avenue and Nevins Street, into a destination for kids who currently practice their airborne tricks on benches, handrails, wide steps and even flower planters.

"Kids love to skate and there could be a place that is better for them than the streets," said Jo Anne Simon, a member of Friends of Douglass-Greene Park, which wants the park — an overgrown and underused play place on the fringes of an industrial area — to have a new bathroom, more playground equipment and a small skate ramp or two.

The park retrofit would cost approximately \$4 million, according to estimates pro-

vided to the group by the Parks Department. "Our goal is to bring people into the park and give them choices of activities," said Simon, who plans to line up funding from local officials before bringing the plan to Community Board 6 and the Parks Department.

One local concrete surfer, Jose Portes, said that all he needs are a few flower planters to double as ledges for his airborne tricks.

"There are a lot of skaters here, but nowhere to skate without worrying that your board is going to shoot out into traffic," said Portes, who freely admits that he has more than a little skateboard wheel was in the game.

Portes and a partner, Michelle Sauer, are opening Smith Street's first skate shop and cafe next week, replacing an organic-food mart near Bergen Street.

The veteran "boarder" said that the hottest neighborhood skate place now is a decrepit flowerpot on the corner of Union and Bond streets, barely an ollie — a "jump," in skate lingo — from the rush of traffic.

"If a new park is designed right it can [make skating] safer for the kids and for everyone else who shares the public space," he said.

Phil Abramson, a spokesman for the city's Parks Department, said officials would be "open to reviewing any proposal."

Once a street sport with a punky image that relegated it to deserted parking lots and home-made half-pipes, city officials now see "boarding" as the new roller-skating. In 2001, Parks built Brooklyn's first skate park within Owl's Head Park in Bay Ridge. The 14,000-square-foot outdoor complex of wooden ramps, concrete bowls and metal handrails cost \$650,000.

This year, Parks approved a plan to build another few skate ramps at J.J. Byrne Park on Fifth Avenue and Third Street in Park Slope as part of a rehab funded by developer Shaya Boyenmelgreen, whose Novo condo tower now looms over the park. Abramson said the city was also building another concrete playground at McCaren Park in Williamsburg.

Lighten up, Columbia

The Brooklyn Paper

Old-fashioned street lamps could soon light the future of Columbia Street.

A group of businesses and residents on the burgeoning waterfront strip have launched a campaign to replace the ob-so-2007 street lamps with the ornate vintage lanterns that blaze in historic districts around the city.

"This is one of the oldest parts of the city and it would be a real shame not to have the old-style lamps," said Frank Manzione, a real-estate broker in the area who recently sent petitions to elected officials.

A historic luminaire costs approximately \$200,000 more than a standard street pole, an extra cost that must borne by the community — but Community Board 6 District Manager Craig Hammerman said the cost was worth it.

"There is growing fear we are losing parts of our history and values as a community," he said.

"This is a small, but symbolic way of retaining that."

The fancy lamps were installed on Clinton Street between Atlantic and Hamilton avenues in Cobble Hill last year. A few years earlier, the lamps appeared on Smith Street and on Atlantic Avenue. In all cases, the lamps were funded with contributions from local officials and private or business donors.

Sam Cooper, spokesman for Assemblywoman Joan Millman (D-Cobble Hill) told The Stoop that his boss likes the idea. But residents should get going: A spokesman for the Department of Design and Construction said the agency would have to know who was paying for the lamps before they could even be ordered. By then, said spokesman John Spavins, it might be too late.

So somebody better start burning the midnight oil — and fast.

— Cohen



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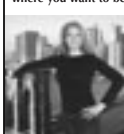
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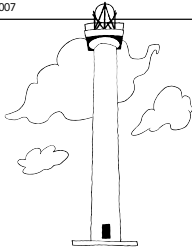
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View of the Leon Levy and Shelby White Court. Left: Marble statue of a youthful Hercules, Roman, Flavian period, A.D. 69-98. Gift of Mrs. Frederick P. Thompson, 1903. Right: Marble statue of Venus, Roman, Imperial, 1st or 2nd century A.D. Copy of a Greek statue of the 3rd or 2nd century B.C. Purchase, 1952. Both works from The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Photo: Laifusa Cohen/Drive Structures



THE stoop

FORT GREENE-CLINTON HILL

Whose park is it anyway?

What could possibly be the downside of a day-long festival celebrating Brooklyn culture, food and music in Fort Greene Park?

Just ask the community board. On Saturday, July 14, three event organizers will hold "Fort Greene Fest," which they have dubbed a "celebration of the culture, cuisine, and artistic diversity of Brooklyn."

The organizers expect anywhere from 3,000 to 8,000 attendees to flood the park and visit the Fest's 100 tents between noon and 10 pm.

Patrons will be able to indulge in food from 69 restaurants, watch locally made short films, and listen to the likes of Afro-Cuban percussionist Tracy Johnson, Fort Greene native and songstress Barbara Tucker, and soul singer Selah.

It sounds fun, right? Not to everyone.

"We have serious concerns about any event with amplified sound," said Community Board 2 District Manager Rob Peris. "Although Fort Greene Park, at 30 acres, is the largest in the district, it's not so large that you can find a quiet place in the park if there's an event going on with amplified sound. And, there's housing very close on three sides, and [on the other side is] a hospital."

But the community board's problem with the festival isn't limited to mere noise. It also feels that propriety has been breached—after all, members of the community board didn't find out about the festival until after it had been approved by the Parks Department (you know, the city agency that actually operates, maintains and manages the park).

The due-process complaint wasn't only the board's complaint.

"We heard about it like everybody heard about it — after it had been permitted," said Charles Jarden, chair of the Fort Greene Park Conservancy.

Indeed, there's no good reason why community boards can't be told about such things before Parks has issued a permit. Except one thing: The Parks Department doesn't care. "CB approval is not required for event permits," said agency spokesman Phil Abramson.

True, the Parks Department could have at least gone through the motions. We Brooklynites are a territorial bunch. If you're going to hold a mini-Woodstock — or, as the Department of Education found with its Khalil Gibran Academy plans, open a new school — it would be nice to give the locals a heads-up.

That said, Jarden, a seasoned planner of Fort Greene Park events, is skeptical this event will attract anything like the numbers being thrown around by its organizers.

"We think they'll be lucky if they get 3,000."

Well, that won't be too noisy, will it?

THE KITCHEN SINK

Hoboken Outpost held its opening party last weekend, and the corner of Fulton and South Portland streets was packed with booze-lovers on stilts, fire-swallowing freaks and the occasional mine. Not to mention the Outpost's signature mojitos and corn on the cob. ... **The Greene Grape** celebrated Mother's Day in the only way it knew how — by drinking. The wine shop held a special tasting of wine made by moms, because, "Motherhood seems like perfect training for a winemaker," or the perfect reason to drink wine.

—E-mail us at Stoop@BrooklynPaper.com

GREENE ACRES



Dana Rubinstein



The city has gone ahead with painting in a bike lane on Willoughby Avenue from Washington Park in Fort Greene until it ends at Broadway in Bushwick. This is the same bike lane that was rejected by Community Board 2.

Lane hugging on Willoughby

By Dana Rubinstein

The Brooklyn Paper

Ten months after the community board voted "no" on a city plan to build five new miles of bike lanes through Fort Greene, the city has gone ahead and started painting in the cyclist-friendly paths anyway.

The Willoughby Avenue bike lane, which will stretch from Washington Park to Broadway in Bushwick, should be completed by May 26, according to Craig Clint, a Department of Transportation spokesman.

Back in July, the board rejected the new lane by just one vote, with the majority claiming that the lanes would make it more difficult for motorists.

"[Bike lanes] create bottlenecks," board member Cheryl Goodman said at the time. "New lanes ... will make the street more congested."

Despite the vote, the DOT rolled ahead — and cyclists are doing wheelies. "Is Fort Greene trying to be like Amsterdam?" quipped Andrew Simon. "If so, I'm not mad."

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Fort Greene going green

By Dana Rubinstein

The Brooklyn Paper

Fort Greene activists are hatching a plan to transform their stately brownstone neighborhood into something that would make Al Gore proud.

Still in its incubation, the idea is to harness the do-gooding power of the Fort Greene Association and other groups to cut down on the neighborhood's use of power, and thereby reduce carbon emissions — which are the main culprit in that no-longer-debated phenomenon of global warming.

At last Saturday's Greenmarket on Washington Park, the Association set up a (human-powered) table to begin recruiting volunteers. Quickly, 85 people expressed interest in helping kick-start a greening initiative, which, admittedly, is still rather vague.

"There's a whole wave of interest," said Phillip Kellogg, the Association's chair.

The incipient plan calls for a volunteer effort to switch to non-polluting sources of energy through

Con Edison; work with elementary schools to plant more trees as part of a class project; replace incandescent light bulbs with fluorescent bulbs; and promote recycling by placing bins in public places, encouraging composting and developing "architectural best practices."

It's the brainchild of Fort Greene Association board member Jed Marcus, and DK Holland, one of the founders of the Hill, a neighborhood journal distributed about twice a year.

"You have to look at yourself and see what you're doing to green your own neighborhood," said Holland, a Fort Greene resident, who's hoping to enlist the support of Clinton Hill residents, too.

Holland has followed her own advice by replacing light bulbs, setting her lights to timers, and the like. She's also using the Web site, www.green.yahoo.com to monitor her personal carbon footprint and reduce the tonnage the climate-changing gas that her activities produce each year.



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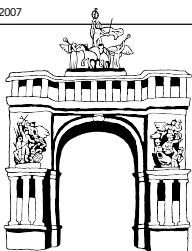
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THE stoop

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Blue Monday in a dirty park

Ah, yes, it's "chicken bone season" again in Prospect Park. Don't recognize the term? Perhaps "Garbage Monday" is what you call it. Take a stroll this Monday morning if you have never seen it: the park starts the week filled with trash.

The trash cans overflow, water bottles, soda cans and doggie bags spill out, plus there are garbage bags piled high next to the cans. Many times those bags have been ripped open (by wild dogs, perhaps) and trash is strewn everywhere.

In addition to the overflowing trash bins, there are those who picnic in the park and do not even attempt to clean up after themselves. They leave the picnic table covered with used paper plates, the ground covered with leftover food and the whole area looking like a dump.

This is not a once-in-a-while occurrence, it happens every weekend (Memorial Day is the worst, so get ready!). But there is no reason why we should ever have a day when our park looks like a trash heap. It is simply unacceptable.

There are two problems with the trash situation, said Eugene Patron, a spokesman for the Prospect Park Alliance. The first is that the Parks Department doesn't put enough money aside for trash collection (Sanitation's jurisdiction ends at the entrance to the park). The second is that it is difficult to enforce the clean-up rules.

Whatever the solution to the trash collection problem, it's going to take money. More trash bins would help, but then we would need more trucks and more manpower to empty them. Last year, Councilman David Yassky (D-Brooklyn Heights) secured funding for a new mini-packer, which is a Lilliputian garbage truck that fits on park paths. But even with a new piece of equipment, the trash collection is still playing catch-up with — and losing to — the trash.

Enforcement will take effort and vigilance on the part of the Park Enforcement Police. Any gathering of more than 20 people in Prospect Park requires a permit — and the permit stipulates that the holder is responsible for cleaning up the premises. Most people don't get the permits (after all, they're having a picnic, not a political rally!), but that doesn't mean they're not required to clean up. So what do they do? Many leave the area a stinkin' mess.

The Park Police has to step up its patrol of the most-popular picnicking spots. That means the area around Ninth Street, for instance, and the wooded part behind the Picnic House. Anywhere there are tables or where grilling is allowed will need to be watched. Citations must be handed out to folks who do not clean up after themselves. If the 76th Precinct can give a hand (as it does with enforcing dog-leash rules), that would be even more eyes on the dirty people, and more tickets.

Short of civilian patrols, armed with plastic garbage bags to hand out to the weekenders, we have to rely on the Parks Department to clean our park and enforce its rules. So next time you see someone leaving without cleaning up, call 311. If the city doesn't get the complaint calls, it won't step up the effort to keep our park clean.

See PS. on page 4

PS... I LOVE YOU



Nica Lalli



Fey on 7th

Tina Fey of "Saturday Night Live" and "30 Rock" was on Seventh Avenue on Wednesday to film "Baby Mama," her movie about a single Yuppie (Fey), who hires a surrogate mother ("SNL" sidekick Amy Poehler) so she can stay on the career track.

Dough! Fire guts a pizzeria



Pizza Plus owner Roz Bayne talks to neighbors after fire.

By Nica Lalli

The Brooklyn Paper

File this in the "no good deed goes unpunished" category: the fire that gutted Piza Plus on Seventh Avenue last Thursday started after a welder accidentally ignited a fire-control system that was being upgraded. "The worst thing about this is that I was trying to do the right thing," said pizzeria owner Roz Bayne as she watched firefighters battle the two-alarm blaze, which broke out at around 9:20 a.m. More than 100 firefighters battled the blaze, which was declared under control by 10:15 a.m. Seventh Avenue was closed in both directions for more than two hours, and dozens of people gathered, first to watch the fire, but then to console Bayne and her employees (whose ranks include Bayne's son).

Well-wishers brought coffee, doughnuts and even flowers as Bayne and her crew realized how much damage there was to the restaurant, which is between 10th and 11th Streets. Residents of the apartments upstairs were forced to relocate.

Bayne, who lives in nearby Ditmas Park, vowed to rebuild.

"We will be back," said Bayne, whose 20-year-old institution is much loved by Slope parents not only for its quality pizza, but also for the big cabinet of coloring books and crayons that keep under-aged customers busy.

Hospital fixes noise woe

By Beethoven Bong

for The Brooklyn Paper

The mystery of the high-pitched squeal on Fifth Street has been solved! It turns out, the tea-kettle-like wail was being caused by some faulty equipment at New York Methodist Hospital.

This week, the hospital promptly replaced the broken equipment — six dried-out fan belts inside one of the cooling towers on its Seventh Avenue side — after The Stoop made inquiries.

Neighbors greeted the relief with ... relief. "It's awesome that I don't hear it anymore,"

said Valerie Zilbersher, who lives on Sixth Street near the hospital. "I'm really glad that it's over, it was freaking me out."

A neighbor, Chris Doundes, added, "Oh yeah, I'm relieved it's gone."

Hospital spokeswoman Lynn Hill said Methodist responded almost immediately after being told of the problem.

Hill said they had the same problem eight years ago with a similar set of fan belts.

A louder sound caused by a busted gearbox inside another cooling tower was discovered after the belts were fixed, but the hospital squashed that problem, too, Hill said.



Coolant tanks in front of New York Methodist Hospital.

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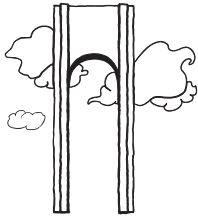
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THE STOOOP

BAY RIDGE-BENSONHURST DYKER HEIGHTS
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Spark-filled memories

Sir, please back away slowly from the sparkler. Haven't you heard about the kid who burned his eye out with one of those things?

True story — I heard it from a man who knew a guy growing up who saw it happen — and now he is on a mission to spread the truth about the evil of sparklers to every man, woman and child in Brooklyn. I first confronted the fire evangelist about a year ago as I was searching Bay Ridge for a few sparklers to give to the neighborhood kids (I'm that kind of guy, what can I say?). The fire evangelist overheard me asking the counter-girl at Associated Supermarket on Third Avenue, and he dutifully leapt into action.

"Why the hell are you looking for firecrackers?" the old man said. "You looking to get someone killed?"

I thought he must have misheard me, and I calmly explained that I wasn't looking for any sticks of dynamite, only some kiddie sparklers.

"That's what I said, firecrackers," the old man growled. "Are you looking to burn your child's eye out?"

Burn my child's eye out, with a sparkler? This guy is a freak. Freak, perhaps, but on the right side of the law. Every store I went into, I was told the same thing: sparklers are illegal and dangerous. I began to think that maybe I was the freak. I mean, how could nine counter-girls and one cranky old man all be wrong?

But what exactly is so bad about sparklers? Everything, say our local cops.

"Sparklers are harmful and illegal," said Officer Steve Agosta of the 62nd Precinct. "Sparklers are very dangerous. They burn hands and start major fires, so we advise that you don't go near them."

It isn't even June, but Officer Agosta wants to get the word out early that she and her comrades are going to war against fireworks — and that means "zero tolerance" (even for sparklers). This means heavy fines, or even possibly jail time, for possession of any fireworks.

At a recent 62nd Precinct Community Council meeting, a couple of officers said that if the public doesn't get its appetite for destruction under control, the cops plan on inviting themselves to our barbecues and cuffing people who violate the prohibition.

"If you store fireworks in a private house, a small spark could ignite the flames and the whole house could go up," said Agosta.

Exploding houses in Brooklyn? Am I being put on here?

Yes, says Bill Weiner, vice president of Phantom Fireworks, one of the largest retail sellers of incendiary devices in America. He believes the city's laws are outdated.

"Truth is, these aren't your father's fireworks," said Weiner. "Today's fireworks are tested in 20 different ways and are safer than they ever were."

Weiner says the vast majority of injuries come from "drunk-uncle Charlie showing off in the backyard," but says that when used responsibly, "fireworks are all about good-old-fashioned family fun."

It isn't just family fun, it is a tradition, and one that Yellow Hooker doesn't plan on giving up any time soon. Heck, I don't

See **YELLOW** on page 4

YELLOW HOOKER

Matthew Lysiak



The tomb in this photo (arrow) will have to be moved as part of the demolition of the Bay Ridge United Methodist Church.

The dead speak at Ridge's doomed 'Green Church'

By Matthew Lysiak

The Brooklyn Paper

Another voice has jumped into the debate over the so-called "Green Church" — this one from the grave.

When the Bay Ridge United Methodist Church building was built almost 100 years ago, it was consecrated with a ceremony for the dead who were reinterred from the original church — the very same dead who will now be dug up when the Green Church is torn down for condos.

It's almost certainly not how those former congregants would have wanted to be treated, says local historian David Elligers.

He recently unearthed a news article from 1901 that made it clear that those early Methodist congregants felt that the church ground was sacred.

"The present generation did not desire the bones of their ancestors scattered to the four winds of heaven," the article reported.

The relocation of the congregants' remains became necessary in 1900, when the city purchased the site of Grace's Methodist Church — including its cemetery — in order to expand roads around what is now Sixth Avenue and 67th Street.

At that time, community members were invited to watch as workers sifted the dirt "to make sure that not a single bone was left behind," said the church's then-Pastor W.L. Davidson.



This box of bones holds the remains of Methodist church congregants who were re-interred when the last church was torn down.

Today's congregation does not feel the same obligation to allow the community to observe the re-interment — and it isn't afraid to say it.

"It is none of your business, or anyone else's," said Pastor Robert Emerick. "We are a competent religious organization and we know how to handle human remains."

Community members looking for information on the current fate of the remains have run into a stone wall sturdier than the Pennsylvania limestone that gives Bay Ridge United Methodist its green hue. But this contentious relationship wasn't created in six months and seven days.

The trouble began shortly after reports of the sale of the Methodist cathedral, when Councilman Vince Gentile (D-Bay Ridge) hosted a community meeting in hopes of opening a dialogue with the sale-minded congregants. But the congregants fought back, claiming that the councilman was trying to infringe on the separation of church and state.

Emerick was later quoted as referring to the remains as "only dust," much to the chagrin of community activists hoping to preserve a piece of Bay Ridge past. Afterward, the pastor decided it would be best to tune-out the media entirely.

"I have decided that I am not going to dignify this process with a response any longer," Emerick said. "I am not happy with how the media has handled this, so I am not going to answer any more questions."

The newspaper article also reported that some remains were of communal and historical importance, including church elder Adrian Bogart. "His body was held in high regards by all Methodists," the article said.

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Who saved Brooklyn? Many claim credit

By Mat Probasco
for The Brooklyn Paper

A few decades ago, Brooklyn's multi-million dollar brownstones were going for \$30,000. Prospect Park was a dump, and Prospect Park Slope had more late night gun battles than hip restaurants.

So who gets credit for turning Brooklyn from a dirty, worn-out hot spot to a place where developers, grass-roots organizers or some other interest group?

On Saturday, community activists from yesterday's met at Borough Hall to tally up the heroes and goats from Brooklyn's slow-but-steady turn-

around from the 1970s to the '90s. And most speakers — at least ones who have to get re-elected — credited We, the People.

"We owe the citizenry a great deal of gratitude for what they did in the 1980s to make that happen," said Assemblyman James Brennan (D-Park Slope).

Street by street, residents banded together to force banks to issue loans within Brooklyn, despite its sometimes resemblance to a slum. They hoped to save the borough's landmarks from the wrecking ball, and direct cops to bruise criminals.

"You can't really talk the rise in Brooklyn without the push-

back of the community against crime," said Brennan, who also praised former Mayor David Dinkins and former Governor Mario Cuomo, both Democrats like Brennan, for adding police. He knocked former Mayor Rudy Giuliani for taking the credit for safer streets.

Even when crime was at its worst, John Muir was organizing the Prospect Park Environmental Center, a group that believed that saving the crime-ridden park would be the key to revitalizing Brooklyn.

"The whole park seemed to be dying," Muir said. People were afraid to walk near

the park for fear that muggers would come from its hedges, which the city removed later.

As New York's economy changed from manufacturing to service- and technology-based, much of Brooklyn was abandoned as a post-industrial wasteland, panels at the symposium said.

"About a third of the shops on Seventh Avenue were boarded up," said Everett Ortner, who bought a brownstone in Park Slope in 1963 — and then spent the next decade cap-

ing his friends to do the same rather than let the suburbs.

Revival Committee, and others petitioned the Brooklyn Union Gas Company to buy old homes and restore them as showrooms. The company offered tours of homes renovated with new appliances, heating and cooling systems.

The plan removed eyesores from otherwise well-kept blocks.

In the meantime, Philip and Mary Gallagher picked banks that were unwilling to invest in much of Brooklyn.

Of course, the end result of all this hard work was the renaissance of a borough, a Phoenix-like rise that is known around the world.

Now, perhaps, the only worry is that the newfound safe, clean borough will become a victim of its own residents' success.

Brooklyn's desirability is encouraging intense growth that brings more people, more cars and some of the very urban ills that borough residents hoped were in the past.

The drastic population influx could give way to Manhattan-style residential density. Love them or hate them, projects like Atlantic

Yards and all the new residential towers in Downtown Brooklyn are happening because developers think there is a market for the thousands of units of housing and tens of millions of square feet of office and retail space.

Many of the people who "saved" Brooklyn can't afford to live there anymore.

But Muir said there is a solution: responsible development. The 36-pas high-rises along wide avenues while protecting the smaller homes on the side streets.

"The trick is to save one while making room for the other," Muir said.

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Teen surrenders cell in Heights

By Lilo H. Stainton
The Brooklyn Paper

84th Precinct

A teenager lost his cellphone to a trio of robbers that attacked him on May 4 on Henry Street, police said.

The 15-year-old victim was at the corner of Joralemon Street, around 7:15 pm, when the three strangers stopped him and asked to use his phone. The teen declined, but one of the men insisted he turn over the device.

Before the stunned boy could respond, the thugs grabbed his cell and his high-end calculator. But then they wanted more.

"Give me your money or I'll punch you," one of the thieves insisted.

The boy was cash-less, though, and the thugs fled on Joralemon Street with the two electronics, valued at \$500.

Moms go wild

Two women, one of them with her children in tow — got into a brawl on Montague Street that ended with one of the women under arrest and facing grand larceny charges, police said.

The 43-year-old victim stopped by a bank branch, near Henry Street, around 12:45 pm on May 12. She was using the ATM when an argument broke out between her and another woman. Eventually, the dispute got physical, and the suspect began kicking and punching the victim.

The woman said she fought back to save herself and her children, but the attacker was still able to steal her wallet. But as the fight started to run, the wallet fell open and most of the contents spilled to the pavement.

Luckily, Police Officer Tamar Keaton of the 84th Precinct happened upon the scene. She arrested the 48-year-old attacker and recovered the wallet, which still held several credit cards and the victim's drivers license.

Bus bust

May 10 was no ordinary day on the B65.

A police arrested an older man after he beat a bus driver with his wooden cane during a pre-dawn trip down Atlantic Avenue.

The 68-year-old suspect now faces assault charges after he attacked the driver when the man tried to break up a fight the senior had started with another passenger, police said.

The 47-year-old driver, a New Jersey resident, suffered bruises and swelling on his chest after he was lashed by the senior around 2:30 am.

Problems began after the bus picked up the suspect at the cor-

POLICE BLOTTER

76th Precinct

ner Jay and Livingston streets and the rider quickly got into a debate with another passenger.

When the driver reached Atlantic Avenue, he stopped the bus and tried to intercede. Instead, the angry senior turned his aggression on the driver.

When police arrived, they searched the area and could not find the suspect — at first. But when they checked the emergency room at Long Island College Hospital down the street, they found their man. There was no mention of any injuries to the senior in the police report.

Whely gone

Cas seemed to suffer more than people last week, when it came to crime in Brooklyn Heights and DUMBO — especially if they were parked on Willow Street, police reports show.

At least three cars were burglarized on Willow Street in Brooklyn Heights, and at least three more were stolen between May 3 and May 12, police said.

Police would not say if they view the crimes as a trend. The attacks included:

- A 2004 Vespa motorbike stolen from Clinton Street, near State Street. The 31-year-old owner parked the \$3,500 scooter around 7 pm on May 3 and when he returned at 11:30 pm on May 6, it was gone.

- A 2004 Toyota RAV4 parked on Willow Street, near Pineapple Street, that lost its airbags. The 73-year-old owner parked the small SUV just after midnight on May 5 and returned at 8 am on May 8 to find a rear window broken, a flashlight, a shovel and a case of spring water.

- A 2005 Chevrolet van was burglarized on May 9, while parked on Willow Street, near Orange Street. The 17-year-old owner left the car at 3:30 pm and returned an hour later to find the driver's side window broken and \$2,700 in

76th Precinct

power tools and electronics, including a \$1,000 GPS, stolen.

• And airbags were stolen from a 2006 Honda CRV parked on Willow Street, near Clark Street. The 38-year-old owner, who lives up the block, left the car around 7 pm on May 11 and returned at 10 am the next day to find the safety devices, valued at up to \$4,000 together, missing.

Transit heist

Police nabbed a man who robbed a Queens resident at knifepoint inside the Borough Hall subway station on May 12.

The 22-year-old suspect allegedly grabbed a younger man around the neck with his weapon drawn as the victim waited for a Brooklyn-bound train shortly after 7 am.

The thief snatched \$100 from the 20-year-old's back pocket and bolted, but he didn't get far. Instead, he ran into Transit Police Officer Rosaria Carrara inside the station, which is beneath at Court and Joralemon streets. After a struggle, she handcuffed the alleged thief. The officer found a bobbycandle in his pocket, but no cash, she said.

76th Precinct

Cut for \$40

Talk about overkill.

A man was slashed by a knife-wielding thug on 181 Street on May 4 for just \$40, police said.

The 27-year-old victim was walking home from work around 6 am when the two strangers approached him from behind, near the corner of Atlantic Avenue.

Mac, the knife

A pair of thugs armed with a kitchen knife sent a third man to the hospital after a May 11 attack on Columbia Street.

The two brutes surrounded the 38-year-old victim around 1:30 am, near the corner of Nelson Street. The pair was supposedly angry about an argument the victim had started with a friend of one of the suspects, and they slashed him in the hand during the dispute.

88th Precinct

Teens busted

Police nabbed a gang of five teens — ages 14 to 16 — who allegedly tried to rob a delivery man of his money, food and bicycle on May 11.

The posse tracked the 34-year-old victim from the restaurant where he works to the deli, on Clinton Street, where he was between Green and Gates avenues, at around 7 pm. That's when the teens rushed to him and insisted he turn over his earnings and the means to his livelihood.

Instead, the deliveryman ran inside the home and dialed 911. Police Officer Edgar Gonzalez arrived with a crew that rounded up the teenagers. The five boys — two ages 14, two 15-year-olds and one who is 16 — now face robbery charges.

Gun heist

Just the sight of the thief's pistol made his point clear.

The robber never had to draw his gun when he attacked a man on Ashland Place on May 8, police said.

The 24-year-old was walking towards Fulton Street and reached the corner of Wiloughby Street just before 9 pm, when he was approached by a stranger.

The man offered him a glimpse at the butt of a gun he had concealed in his sweatshirt, and insisted, "What do you have in your pockets?"

The victim got the full picture loud and clear and handed over a silver iPod and a Verizon cellphone. He then turned and ran off, before the thief could use the weapons.

Cell swipe

Police arrested two teens after they allegedly stole a cellphone from a man walking along Dekalb Avenue on May 12.

The 32-year-old victim was chatting on his mobile when he was attacked, just before 7 pm, near the corner of Fort Greene Place. The two thieves rushed toward him and grabbed the phone

They want your blood

The 76th Precinct is conducting a blood drive on May 31, from 2-7 pm. Healthy people are invited to stop by the precinct stationhouse at 191 Union Street, near Henry Street, and participate in the life-saving mission.

For more information, call Community Affairs officers at the 76th Precinct at (718) 834-3211 during the day. — Stainton

Hospital heist

A 39-year-old patient who was discharged from Long Island College Hospital on Hicks Street on May 3 left with a Myrtle Avenue store, near Carlen Avenue, just before 3 am. One shot lodged in his right arm and the other grazed his back.

The victim said the shots seemed to come from across the street.

Two days later, police were called to a gunfight outside a diner on Fulton Street, near Atlantic Avenue, around 4:30 am. A 42-year-old cook at the restaurant said an argument over a food order started inside and then spilled onto the sidewalk, where someone pulled a gun and fired.

Although police couldn't find anyone hurt at the scene, a 29-year-old man was located later that morning at the emergency room of Interfaith Hospital, on Atlantic Avenue, near Nstrand Avenue. The man, who was shot once in the stomach and once in the right shoulder, later admitted he was part of the diner squabble.

Laptop lost

Police want you when you are supposed to go and get money, not lose it. But a 27-year-old neighborhood man lost his laptop when he visited a branch on Smith Street on May 3, police said.

The victim stopped by the ATM, near the corner of Warren Street, around 7:30 am. He placed his computer on the ground as he withdrew cash from the machine and then left — without retrieving the laptop.

The man descended into the subway system and climbed aboard a Manhattan-bound train. Only when the train pulled away did the victim realize his computer was missing. He got off the train and ran back to the bank, but his laptop had disappeared without a trace. The Dell Latitude was valued at \$500, he told police.

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Dial P for perp as thug steals gal's cellphone

By Gersh Kuntzman
The Brooklyn Paper

A woman had her cellphone stolen right out of her hand after a perp tried to grab her

purse at the corner of Fourth Avenue and 12th Street at 2 pm on May 12.

The 23-year-old victim told cops that she was near the corner when a thief ran up and tried

to grab her pocketbook. When she resisted, the perp took the Samsung cellphone and ran off towards Third Avenue.

The woman did not get a good look at the man.

This smells bad

The Ride-Aid dragrace on Seventh Avenue lost thousands of dollars in perfume when a brazen thief, or a team of hoods, ran into the store, broke into a locked display case, and stole the contents on May 12.

The theft took place at around 8:30 pm, even though a security camera is trained on the display case, cops said.

Police put the total value of the stolen scents at \$1,472, but a manager told The Brooklyn Paper that the loss was "more than \$5,000."

"There were three guys who

78TH PRECINCT

Come in and broke into the case," said Prem Persaud, a manager at the store, which is at Fifth Street. "They got away with more than 150 bottles. I'd say the whole thing is much more than \$5,000."

A thief had taken the car and driven it around for a few hours before abandoning it on a pedestrian walkway at Eastern Parkway and Albany Avenue. By the time the owner noticed the theft, the car was already at the tow pound at the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

She had to go there and pay the ticket before the 1999 Honda Civic was returned to her possession.

Caddy cad

Third-row seating is one of the popular options on the Cadillac Escalade — so popular that a thief didn't bother to steal the car, but took the extra seats instead.

The owner of the 2005 deluxe wheels told cops that he'd parked his gas-guzzler on Carroll Street between Eighth Avenue and Prospect Park West at 9:30 pm on May 10. But when he returned to the mega-car the next morning, he noticed a small drill hole in the driver's-side door frame.

Closer inspection revealed that the back seats, valued at \$700, had been removed, along with a navigation system, a ra-

dio and wheel covers. The total value of the theft was \$2,000, cops said.

Bicycle thief

An excuse-minded thief stole a woman's hybrid road bicycle from her apartment at around 10 am on May 7, cops said.

The 32-year-old woman told police that she believed the thief had a key to her apartment, which is on Fifth Avenue between Park and Sterling places, because there were no signs of forced entry.

The bike is worth \$400, she said.

iGone

A Sixth Avenue woman lost her iPod and a digital camera to a thief who broke into her apartment on May 10.

The 46-year-old victim told cops that the theft must have occurred between 12:30 and 1:15 pm, when she was not in the apartment, which is between Sixth and Seventh streets. There were no signs of forced entry on the front door, but a second-floor bedroom door had been forced open.

An unspecified amount of jewelry was also pilfered in the heist.

Stealthy thief

A woman who works in a Fifth Avenue gift shop lost the wallet out of her pocketbook on May 10, although the bag was never out of her sight, she said.

The Houdini-like crime occurred sometime between 10 am and 7 pm, cops said. The woman had reported to work at the store, which is in Baltic Street, and placed her handbag behind the counter.

She told cops that the counter was never unattended. Yet when she retrieved the bag at the end of her shift, she noticed that the wallet — which had contained \$160 and various credit cards — was gone.

Game theory

A 14th Street apartment was cleaned out of video games and a laptop on May 11 while its residents were out, cops said.

It's unclear how the thief or thieves got into the apartment, which is between Third and Fourth avenues, but they left with Sony Playstation games, a Dell computer and a Nextel phone.

A neighbor told cops that he heard nothing.

Unhappy visit

A Williamsburg man who visited a friend on Butler Street

on May 9 had his backpack stolen after accidentally leaving it on the friend's front stoop.

The man told cops that he dropped by the building, which is on the quiet block of Butler between Fourth Avenue and Queensbury Place, and forgot the backpack, which contained \$70 and various credit cards.

The bag was stolen long before the man went back outside to head home, at around 6:25 pm. When the 26-year-old called his credit card companies, at least one told him the card had already been used.

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"I don't give a [expletive] who you are," the driver responded, before punching the cop in the face several times. The victim's fellow men in blue quickly responded and arrested the 60-year-old perp.

The cop had some bruising above his right eye, but wasn't hospitalized.

Bully busted

A schoolyard bully was arrested after shaking down an 11-year-old boy for his lunch money at 2:15 pm in a 7th Street playground on May 8.

The trouble began when the

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North Shore **LIJ** Schneider Children's Hospital

By **Matthew Lysiak**
and **Michael Gardina**
The Brooklyn Paper

68th Precinct

A woman who thought she hit the jackpot ended up getting jacked by the oldest scam in the book on May 8.

The 43-year-old victim received notification at her home, on Fifth Avenue near 71st Street, that she was a big winner — but in order to collect her prize, she first needed to pay her taxes. She was also instructed to keep the deal quiet.

"Due to a mix-up of names we urge you to keep this private and confidential," the letter insisted.

The victim obeyed the letter and sent two wire transfers totaling \$9,200 to the mysterious company, but when she called to confirm her jackpot, she discovered that it was all a ruse.

Perp on cop

A cop on a Mother's Day stroll with his parents was almost hit by a car and then was smacked in the face several times by a foul-mouthed driver on May 13, police said.

The trouble started just before 11 am, when a 39-year-old cop was walking with his parents on Fifth Avenue near 81st Street.

A man trying to park his car drove onto the sidewalk and almost ran into him.

The mad driver then pushed open his door, hitting the cop, who quickly identified himself to the maniac as a police officer.

"I don't give a [expletive] who you are," the driver responded, before punching the cop in the face several times. The victim's fellow men in blue quickly responded and arrested the 60-year-old perp.

The cop had some bruising above his right eye, but wasn't hospitalized.

A schoolyard bully was arrested after shaking down an 11-year-old boy for his lunch money at 2:15 pm in a 7th Street playground on May 8.

The trouble began when the

bully pushed the victim up against a fence and held a clenched fist to his face.

"Give me your lunch money," the bully hissed. "Or else I will beat you up."

The boy was quick to hand over \$24 in cash, telling cops that he feared for his life. He also reported that it wasn't the first time the boy shook him down at the Fort Hamilton Parkway playground. And he said the bully threatened him with further mischief.

"I will beat you up if you have no money tomorrow," he said.

Police later arrested the bully, who was also 11-years-old, but the lunch money has yet to be recovered.

Sandman swipe

A 45-year-old man who fell asleep on the R train awoke to find his pants cut and his wallet stolen on May 12.

The heist went down as the victim, heading home to Bay Ridge from Manhattan at 6:30 am, tried to catch some shut-eye. But when he woke up at the 95th Street station, he noticed his pocket was slit and wallet removed.

The man lost some pictures and credit cards, but luckily he was carrying no money.

Old lady robbed

A pickpocket working a bus on May 8 nabbed an 85-year-old lady's purse near Fort Hamilton Parkway.

The thief made his move by bumping his victim as she was getting off the bus at her stop near 79th Street just after 10 am.

Only after the bus drove away did she realize that her wallet was missing from her purse.

The perp made off with seven credit cards, pictures, a \$100 gift card, and \$30.

Boarding school

Three teens were arrested after a botched attempt to wrestle a skateboard away from a 15-year-old boy led to violence on May 7.

Cops say the trouble began as the victim was skateboarding near Walkersman Place and Ridge Avenue, when three teens gave chase before catching up with him and wrestling him to the ground, where they kicked him several times in the left arm.

The boy managed to hold on to his skateboard, and then led cops to find the mischievous trio, who were promptly arrested.

62nd Precinct

No tip

A food deliveryman lost more than just his tip when he was held at knifepoint in front of a Shore Parkway building on May 11.

The victim went into the building, which is near Bay 14 Street, on a routine delivery. At around 1 pm, the ding approached the deliveryman as he was leaving and demanded change for a 100-dollar bill. When the victim refused, the perp pulled out the shiny blade and said, "Give me the money."

The deliveryman coughed up the dough.

Car raid

A Cropsy Avenue used car dealer had the surprise of a lifetime when thugs not only took a silver luxury car, but also swiped his dealer plates on May 11.

The victim's dealership, near 18th Avenue, opened at around noon that day. That's when the dealer discovered that thieves had taken a 1999 Mercedes Benz 320, police said.

The owner thinks it was an inside job because the thieves also took the plates that were in a locked safe.

PM burg

An elderly man went out on May 3 to run some errands, but when he returned to his 64th Street home, he discovered the front door was open and his property was missing.

The 92-year-old man came back to his house, which is near Bay Parkway, at around 2 pm. Thugs had taken \$600, including jewelry while he was out, police said.

Tutors looted

A Queens Road language-learning center learned the international language of crime on May 10.

The learning center, which is near West 6th Street, was broken into at around 12:15 pm. The perps entered by breaking the front door and left with more than \$4,000 worth of electronics, police said.

Family safe

Thugs took more than \$15,000 from a safe inside a 68th Street apartment on May 9, police said.

The victim came back to his home, which is near 17th Avenue, at around 7 am. He discovered his front window was open and a safe that held his savings was cracked.

The victim told police that



More steroid news

One week after drug enforcement authorities raided Lowen's, the popular mom-and-pop pharmacy at the corner of Third Avenue and 69th Street, new details emerged about the store's alleged steroid sales. The Daily News reported this week that the drugstore was using its pharmacy to mix stanozolol, a powerful anabolic steroid — and that the store received 100 requests for steroids and human growth hormone from all over the country while the agents were conducting their May 9 raid. More than \$100,000 in steroids and growth hormones were seized in the raid. This week, it was business as usual at Lowen's. A manager refused to comment.

— Matthew Lysiak

YELLOW...

Continued from page 3

even have an Uncle Charlie!

A source pointed me in the direction of at least one guy in Bay Ridge who still sells the fiery freedom sticks, and sure enough, I found him. No, there was no shiny display case, but the goods were stashed in the back.

Of course, I protect my sources — of information and of fireworks — so I'm not going to reveal the location.

And don't try to stop me. The risk of jail is well worth taking for a few pleasurable hours making sparkler circles in the back yard as it gets dark. But for those less-adventurous souls out there still looking to celebrate Independence Day with a little boom, there remains one government-sanctioned firework alternative left in Brooklyn, according to Agosta.

You know those little snappers that you throw at the ground and they make that pop?

All fireworks are illegal," Agosta repeated. "But if you are only using little snappers, that might be all right."

Snappers "might" be all right? Have you heard of the kid who lost a toe when he stepped on two snappers at the same time? It's true. I heard it from a guy who knew a guy....

THE KITCHEN SINK

Leif Ericson Day School at 1037 72nd St., where Juan Amendano died last Friday, is raising funds to aid Amendano's family. Just stop by the school or call (718) 748-9023 for more information. ... The much ballyhooed Viking ship that was scheduled to land at **Owls Head Park** for this year's **Viking Festival** on May 19 has, unfortunately, been lost at sea. Sources tell The Stoop that the mighty vessel's captain was in a car accident and won't be able to make the trip to Bay Ridge. ... **Bay Ridge Cheesesteak Factory** at 8407 Third Ave. is offering a 20-percent discount to union employees. ... Stop the **Asian Longhorned Beetle!** The scourge of the northern parts of Brooklyn may be spreading to our area. All residents are now required to call 311 to arrange a pick up time when discarding any woody debris. In this great effort to save the trees, the Parks Department has mailed out thick paper instructions. ... Spring may have just sprung, but the crowded basketball courts in **Shore Road Park** at 79th Street and Shore Road have been heated for some time — too bad the same can't be said for Alex's jump shot. Yeah, you know who I'm talkin' about! ... Overheard last week while in line in **Bagel Boy** at 8002 Third Ave.: "Park Slope is full of hypocrites," a woman said. "They pretend like they are so tolerant and evolved, but the minute some Muslims wanted to build a school there, they act like their hair is on fire."

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PTAs to back Arabic school in Boerum Hill

But parents say they feel dumped on



The city will house its new Arabic language and culture school in this Dean Street high- and middle school building — despite anger from parents.

By Dana Rubinstein

The Brooklyn Paper

The two Parent-Teacher Associations at a Boerum Hill school will back a city plan to house an Arabic language and culture academy in its building, despite complaining that they had no say in the decision and facing a mini-revolt from many parents when the plan was presented after the fact at an "emergency meeting" on Monday.

The meeting came six days after a May 8 conference at which the Department of Education informed principals and the PTAs of the two schools housed in the Dean Street building — the Brooklyn High School for the Arts and the Math and Science Exploratory middle school — that the Khalil Gibran International Academy would be moving into this fall.

"There's some real skepticism on the part of parents, but if

[they] can be convinced, the community could help make the program a success," said Thomas McMahon, the vice president of the middle school PTA, after the unprecedented Monday night meeting.

McMahon emphasized that the "skepticism" was not connected to the school's Arabic language or culture curriculum — which was partly involved in the dispute that killed the city's initial plan to house the school in the PS 282 elementary school building in Park Slope.

"The debate is not about the creation of an Arabic studies school," McMahon said. "The issue is whether the school building can support an additional school, even for the two years it has been proposed."

Despite the uneasy detente between Department of Education officials and the PTAs, tensions still run high about how the transfer of the Gibran Academy from Park Slope to Boerum Hill

came about.

The city's decision came just days after the department shelved its initial PS 282 plan.

That school's PTA insisted that it should have been consulted, that there was no room for an additional school, and that it was unwise to mix young children with teenagers. Some critics also objected to the establishment of a public school devoted to Arabic culture.

The Boerum Hill decision sparked a similar sense of outrage for nearly identical reasons.

Lisa Gioe-Cordi, the middle school principal, wrote to Schools Chancellor Joel Klein that "the school administration was not given a say in the [department's] decision to place a third school in the building."

Sandra Toppin, the president of the high school PTA, remarked at the Monday meeting that "it was obvious ... that the decision was already made," though she promised not to fight it after city officials

vowed to put in writing that the Academy would stay no longer than two years and that long-promised renovations to the school would be made.

Despite school leaders' conciliatory words — and the presence of a damage control team in the guise of a deputy mayor, a high-ranking Education official, and the principal of the Arabic academy — parents greeted city officials on Monday with barely concealed rage.

Sonjay Murray, whose son is a student at the middle school, told Garth Harries, the head of the Department of Education's Office of New Schools, that the Boerum Hill building had "no room."

Harries insisted that the building had room for 600 more students and that the new Academy would only occupy four classrooms and one administrative space.

Deputy Mayor Dennis Walcott tried to come to his assistance, telling the irate crowd that, "Our goal is to minimize any type of disruption. Garth will have clearer, more concise answers after we do [the May 16] walk-through."

Parents were skeptical. "Part of the issue is the lack of trust between parents and the [Department of Education]," said Marcia Van Wagner, whose child is in the sixth grade.

"There's a 'Shoot first and ask questions later' strategy. What are the consequences if the things you put in writing don't happen?"

Gibran Academy founder and principal Debbie Almontaser attended the meeting and said she was not to blame for the controversy. "I had no say [over location]," she said.

"The only thing I had a say in was that I'd like to be in Brooklyn, PS 282's reaction was valid. In that situation, I probably would have left the same way."

The Gibran Academy would be the city's first dual-language school to focus on Arabic, according to the Department of Education, which said that the city already has 60 similar programs for languages ranging from Haitian Creole to Mandarin.

The city has said that Brooklyn is a desirable venue for the school because it is home to a sizeable Arab community.

At Monday night's meeting, no school parents expressed objections to the theme of the Gibran Academy, although two outsiders did complain noisily.

Sunset Park resident Desiree Bernstein railed about Islamic religious law and managed to raise Walcott's hackles.

"I find it unfortunate that this school is being singled out," said Walcott.

"It is like dual-language schools that teach Korean. This school will be like any other New York City public high school, junior high school, or elementary school. The issue is about space."

Parents were equally quick to dismiss the anti-Arabic rhetoric. "She doesn't represent us," said Kristen Harvey, whose child is in sixth grade. "The only issue is space."

Exclusive: Almontaser speaks!

By Dana Rubinstein

The Brooklyn Paper

First Park Slope parents, and then their Boerum Hill counterparts, have been engaging in a seemingly epic — and nasty — scuffle about the placement of an Arabic language and culture academy into an existing school building.

But amid all this shouting, one voice was largely absent: that of Khalil Gibran International Academy Principal Debbie Almontaser (photo right).

Almontaser is a native of Yemen and a longtime veteran of the Brooklyn public school system, having worked for years as an elementary school teacher and diversity consultant.

This week, Almontaser spoke with The Brooklyn Paper about her school, her vision, and the ensuing brohaha.

Q: This week, you attended a Boerum Hill PTA's "emergency" meeting about the city's latest plan to house your school within the existing High School for the Arts on Dean Street. How did you feel about the parents' concerns?

A: These are issues and concerns that parents have a right to raise. I feel for them. I know how they feel in terms of being in this situation. I'm also in this predicament, in that my school is going to be placed in a building that already has two other schools, and I won't have the luxury of space that ideally I would like to have or had envisioned when proposing this school to [the city]. But the school is approved, and we're determined to open it, and we're determined to work collaboratively with the other principals to make it work.

Q: At the meeting, you said that you had no role in deciding the school's location, except for your preference for Brooklyn. That said, did you expect the process of placing the school to be so difficult?



Debbie Almontaser, principal of the Khalil Gibran International Academy.

A: I did. This is just the nature of New York City and the lack of space for many things. ... The Academy is quite an intriguing school for many people, and I'm not surprised by some of the questions that were raised ... because ... you have people who are not very well informed about the public school system, [who don't] understand [that the schools] are not religion-based. I'm glad [questions were] raised. I've answered them. Deputy Mayor [Dennis] Walcott answered them. This is a public school providing a non-religious education for students who are interested in learning Arabic as a second language.

Q: What will the school's curriculum be like?

A: All of the [city's] core curriculum expectations [will be met]. Sixth graders will learn about the ancient world ... We will have reading and writing, math, science. What will be different [is that] we will be able to infuse historical information into math and science and literature ... With any foreign language you engage in, you need to learn the history, culture and customs of the people in order to navigate the language effectively and not offend anyone.

Q: Could you give us an example of how Arabic history and culture will infuse the core curriculum?

A: In math, as you know, algebra originated from the Arab world. So, we'll look at the historic back-

ground of algebra, at the historic background of the Arabic numbers. The numbers we use today are Arabic numerals.

Q: How much of the instruction will be in Arabic?

A: The language aspect of it will take place during our extended day, from 3 to 5 p.m. ... Students are expected to pass the Arabic Regents in order to graduate, so we're very serious about them developing this language.

Q: Why is it important for public-school students to have the option of learning Arabic?

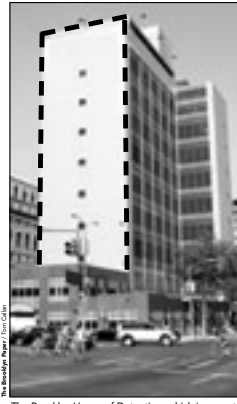
A: At this time and age, it's so important for students in the United States to have one or two languages under their belt. Right now, Arabic is one of the most sought-after languages in the entire world. There are millions of dollars in federal funding that are available to education systems to teach Arabic. I saw this as a very important opportunity ... to provide [students] a competitive edge for the 21st century, [so] they can develop into globally oriented citizens, [so] they can learn about the world from many different lenses.

Q: What do you say to conservative critics like Daniel Pipes, who called Arabic language instruction "inevitably laden with pan-Arabist and Islamist baggage?"

A: He studied the Arabic language as a Middle Eastern historian and he seems to have done really well at still maintaining his roots and his identity. And I'm confident that we will be able to teach students Arabic as a second language and make sure they maintain their identity as he has.

Q: Do you expect to fill all 60 seats in your first class of sixth graders at Khalil Gibran, giving how late in the year it is?

A: Absolutely, without a doubt. We had a Brooklyn middle school fail, and we had over 60 families [expressing interest].



The Brooklyn House of Detention, which is expected to reopen, could be flanked by residential towers (area inside dotted lines, above).

JAILHOUSES

Continued from page 1

to the rear of the existing Atlantic Avenue structure, with the mixed-use towers occupying city-owned land east and west of the jail that is now used for parking.

The request for proposals said the redesign must "ensure that inmates and city personnel should not be able to view into the new residential and/or commercial developments" — and vice-versa.

Shops would fill the ground floors of all three buildings, a nod to pressure from Borough President Markowitz, who has long pushed the city to "knit" the Boerum Hill part of Atlantic Avenue back to the Brooklyn Heights and Cobble Hill side by adding in the pedestrian-friendly retail at the jail. The Beep cheered the city's call for residential development at the jail.

"I've always felt that with creative planning, this site can serve the needs of the city's Department of Correction while also meshing with the character of this thriving area," he said.

Markowitz said the jail-side apartments would do just fine on the open market. And real-estate experts agree.

"People certainly have been open to looking at apartments [nearby]. They are buying even knowing that the jail could reopen," said Sue Wolfe, an Atlantic Avenue broker and the president of the Boerum Hill Association, which opposes the jail's reopening.

Janel Patterson, a spokeswoman for the EDC, said city officials would decide whether to put hotel rooms, apartments or offices in the towers based on the strength of the developers' proposals. She added that the city has not definitively decided that residential development must be part of the site, but said that whatever is built "must be compatible with the Department of Correction's plans" to reopen the jail.



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The Brooklyn Paper / Gregory Hargrove

The Brooklyn Paper / Gregory Hargrove

Drink this, Brooklyn!

Adam Goldstein (left in photo above) and partner Darrin Siegfried, co-owners of the wine store Red, White and Bubbly, at 211 Fifth Ave. in Park Slope, toasted their new Brooklyn Wine Co. by cracking open a few bottles of their "Feliz White" and "Feliz Red" varieties. The May 11 party drew the bor-

ough's glitterati, including District Attorney Charles Hynes (photo right). The borough's top lawman celebrated the launch of Brooklyn's first wine label by partaking of a little red, by the way. The wine (admittedly made in California) was crafted from a recipe cooked up by Goldstein and Siegfried, who

wanted their wine to be high-quality, yet affordable "everyday" vino. And though it's bottled in the so-called Golden State, everything else — from the bold flavors to the bridge on the label to artist Ryan Saslow, who drew the logo — is pure Brooklyn.

— Christie Risk

Slope to the city — by bike

By Harry Cheadle
for The Brooklyn Paper

Park Slope has more bike commuters than any other neighborhood in New York City — and more may be hitting the road soon thanks to new bike lanes, a new study revealed this week.

Virtually everyone who responded to the Department of City Planning survey — a whopping 95 percent — asked the city to build more bike lanes to improve safety for both riders and drivers.

"Cars refuse to share the road with bikers," one survey-taker wrote. "They tail us, beep at us, speed by at very close distances, and often cut me off."

Another respondent was more blunt: "I feel like I'm risking my life by riding my bike in NYC."

Help could be on the way. The borough is experiencing a mini-boom in bike lane construction. The Department of Transportation just laid down a new lane along Wiloughby Avenue in Fort Greene and Clinton Hill, and is planning to go ahead with a much-debated bike lane along Ninth Street in Park Slope.

The Ninth Street bike lane makes sense given the study's central finding: more people commute by bike from Park Slope than from any other area of the city (see map). A part of the Upper West Side was second on the list.

More Brooklynites might commute by bike if there were more such lanes. According to the survey, the top reason non-commuting cyclists gave for not biking was not, as one might expect, the distance to work, but the behavior of drivers, the traffic and the danger of biking on narrow, bike-lane-free streets.

Statistics show that 225 New York City bikers died in crashes from 1996-2005 — but only one was in a marked bike lane.

"I won't ride home on Seventh Avenue," said Sheila, who works at On the Move, a Park Slope bike shop (she did not want to give her last name). "It's the drivers. They don't want bikes on the road."

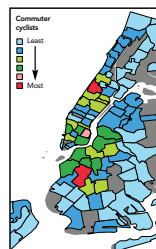
Sheila said many cyclists tell her about being hit by motorists who drive off without checking to see if the bike rider was okay.

A sizable majority of cyclists said they take longer routes to avoid streets without bike lanes.

But non-cyclists often resist the city's bike-lane enthusiasm. Some Park Slope residents are protesting the Ninth Street plan, and last year, Community Board 2 voted down the Wiloughby Avenue lane that is currently being installed.

One thing is clear from the survey: bikers believe that safety conditions need to improve. "It's everybody's problem," said Sheila. "The cyclist isn't going to kill a car. A car could potentially kill a cyclist."

A DOT spokesman said the agency was still reviewing the study, which was released as part of the Bloomberg Administration's promotion of Bike Month 2007 in May.



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Who saved Brooklyn? Many claim credit

By **Mat Probasco**
for The Brooklyn Paper

A few decades ago, Brooklyn's multi-million dollar brownstones were going for \$30,000. Prospect Park was a dump, a bumpy bump and Park Slope had more late night gun battles than hip restaurants.

So who gets credit for turning Brooklyn from a dirty word to a hot spot — police, developers, grass-roots organizers or some other interest group?

On Saturday, community ac-

tivists from yesteryear met at Borough Hall to tally up the heroes and goats from Brooklyn's slow-but-steady turnaround from the 1970s to the '90s. And most speakers — at least the ones who have to get re-elected — credited We, the People.

"We owe the citizenry a great deal of gratitude for what they did in the 1980s to make that happen," said Assemblyman James Brennan (D-Park Slope).

Street by street, residents banded together to force banks

to issue loans within Brooklyn, despite its sometime resemblance to a slum. They hoped to save the borough's landmarks from the wrecking ball, and direct cops to bruise criminals.

"You can't really talk about the rise in Brooklyn without the pushback of the community against crime," said Brennan, who also praised former Mayor David Dinkins and former Governor Mario Cuomo, both Democrats like Brennan, for adding police. (He knocked former Mayor Rudy Giuliani for taking

the credit for safer streets.)

Even when crime was at its worst, John Muir was organizing the Prospect Park Environmental Center, a group that believed that saving the crime-ridden park would be the key to revitalizing Brooklyn.

"The whole park seemed to be dying," Muir said. People were afraid to walk near the park for fear that muggers would leap from its hedges, which the city removed later.

As New York's economy changed from manufacturing to service- and technology-based,

much of Brooklyn was abandoned as a post-industrial wasteland, panelists at the symposium said.

"About a third of the shops on Seventh Avenue were boarded up," said Everett Ottner, who bought a brownstone in Park Slope in 1963 — and then spent the next decade cajoling his friends to do the same rather than flee to the suburbs.

Ottner, founder of the Brownstone Revival Committee, and others petitioned the Brooklyn Union Gas Company to buy old homes and restore them as showrooms. The company offered tours of homes renovated with new appliances, heating and cooling systems.

The plan removed eyesores from otherwise well-kept blocks. In the meantime, Philip and Mary Gallagher picked banks that were unwilling to invest in much of Brooklyn.

"The strategy was to fix two or three of the worst houses on about a dozen blocks [to] encourage other homeowners to fix up their own buildings," Philip Gallagher said.

Of course, the end result of all this hard work was the renaissance of a borough, a

Phoenix-like rise that is known around the world.

Now, perhaps, the only worry is that the newfound safe, clean borough will become a victim of its own residents' success.

Brooklyn's desirability is encouraging intense growth that brings more people, more cars and some of the very urban ills that borough residents hoped were in the past.

The drastic population influx could give way to Manhattan-style residential density. Love them or hate them, projects like Atlantic Yards and all

the new residential towers in Downtown Brooklyn are happening because developers think there is a market for the thousands of units of housing and tens of millions of square feet of office and retail space.

Many of the people who "saved" Brooklyn can't afford to live there anymore.

But Muir said there is a solution: responsible development that puts high-rises along wide avenues while protecting the smaller homes on the side streets.

"The trick is to save one while making room for the other," Muir said.



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Explosive bust for the 68

By **Christie Rizk**
The Brooklyn Paper

Bay Ridge cops went undercover last week to sting a would-be fireworks entrepreneur — nabbing a Queens woman for attempting to sell pyrotechnic goodies, which is illegal in New York State.

Here's how it went down: Earlier this month, an officer from the 68th Precinct posted on Craig's List for tips on where he could buy fireworks. On May 7, an Astoria resident wrote back, offering 20 high-power "Mortar Shell Bombs" and assorted "Roman Candles" for the low, low price of \$125, cops said.

The undercover officer met the woman at the R-train station at 68th Street and made the exchange. Ten minutes later, his backup swooped down and arrested the unsuspecting saleswoman. Cops identified the seller as Christine Persad and charged her with "sale of fireworks," a misdemeanor.

Persad could not be reached for comment. However, judging by current Craig's List postings, her arrest may not be the last for "sale of fireworks" this year.

"Hey, I need some fireworks in two weeks," said one poster (or, perhaps, another undercover cop). "I'll have \$1250 to spend. Email me with info."



Parks commissioner Adrian Benepe (tall guy in center) and Councilman Vince Gentile (shorter guy without Viking hat) hang out with students from PS 69 after the groundbreaking for the new Leif Erickson playground.

A plunderer's paradise

By **Matthew Lysiak**
The Brooklyn Paper

If only Norwegian explorer Leif Ericson were alive to see this.

Leif Erickson Park, located between 66th and 67th Street on Eighth Avenue, will undergo a \$1.4-million renovation that would make any Viking proud.

The new makeover will include new play equipment with a Viking ship theme, new swings, a synthetic turf volleyball area, basketball half-courts, game tables, and benches, a picnic area with accessible seating, and lush perimeter gardens.

Officials got downright poetic at the prospect of a new park.

"Youngsters will delight in the new playground," said Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe at Tuesday's groundbreaking (elected officials and agency heads donned horned helmets for the occasion, and Swedish fish, Danish cookies, and Icelandic water were handed out to the kids).

Just as the park's namesake explored North America, children can make their own discoveries while playing in this state-of-the-art playground.

Indeed, the youngest Vikings are al-

ready looking forward to seeing the barren playground transformed into a plunderer's paradise.

"It could be really cool," said one young boy, though he quickly added a cynical aside: "Anything would be better than how it is now."

Almost all of the rehab costs were financed by Councilman Vince Gentile (D-Bay Ridge).

The park is named for Leif Ericson, the first millennial Viking best known as the first European to set foot on North America the did it nearly 500 years before Columbus, that copycat).

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The Brooklyn Paper's essential guide to the Borough of Kings

May 19, 2007

Breaking the 'Rules'

New boro-based movie isn't even playing here! Who are these guys?

By Karen Butler
for The Brooklyn Paper

Rule number one: When a movie is called "Brooklyn Rules," it should be playing at movie theaters in Brooklyn. Director Michael Corrente's new movie violates that one (it's currently only playing at just two theaters in Manhattan).

Rule number two: When making a movie with Brooklyn in the title, don't shoot it in Canada or some other unlikely locale.

At least Corrente got that one right. "I can't imagine filming this in Toronto," Corrente told GO Brooklyn. "Talk about not having credibility. They would crucify us!"

Shot in King's County and based on a script by Brooklyn-born, Emmy Award-winning "Sopranos" scribe Terence Winter, the movie is about three buddies who, don't you know it, get caught up with the Mafia.

While ambitious Michael (Freddie Prinze Jr.) hits the books and charms pretty co-ed Ellen (Mena Suvari) at Columbia University, skirt-chaser Carmine (Scott Caan) stays in the neighborhood and works for hot-headed mobster Caesar (Ale Baldwin). Sweetheart Bobby (Bensonhurst's Jerry Ferrara) plans a simple, stable life that includes his girlfriend and a job at the post office, but when one of the guys is unexpectedly killed, the other two begin questioning their choices.

Reshaping tired plotlines, no matter who's doing it, is definitely against the rules. The film covers friendship, loyalty, the desire for a better life beyond the neighborhood and the temptation of a career in crime — all themes exhausted by other mob-oriented entertainment like the short-lived TV series "The Black Donnellys," and the films "The Departed" and "Alpha Dog."

Unfortunately, "Brooklyn Rules" covers



CINEMA

"Brooklyn Rules" is showing at AMC Empire 25 (234 W. 42nd St. at Eighth Avenue in Manhattan). For information, call (212) 389-3939.

very little new ground, and, even though Corrente and his cast are game, it will probably have a better life on video than in theaters. Despite believable performances from the cast — some dialogue between the friends even rang true — it's a shame there



No-so-good fellas: Freddie Prinze Jr., Jerry Ferrara and Scott Caan, at left, get local with director Michael Corrente, above, in the new film "Brooklyn Rules" which finds them playing Brooklyn boys who get caught up in the mob.

"A Bronx Tale" and "Good Fellas."

Well, maybe not — the film almost never saw the light of day. "Frankly, nobody wanted the movie," Corrente recalled, explaining how he fought for years to get the film a theatrical release. "Everybody wanted the DVD rights because there is no risk. That's the state of affairs with where we are in independent filmmaking."

The cast, which did a fine job, is also proud of the film, which suffered a number of delays including the loss of original director Griffin Dunne.

"When I finally saw the film at the Tribeca Film Festival, I realized I had never been proud of a movie before," said Prinze, a former teen heartthrob, best known for his work in "Scooby Doo" and "She's All That."

"I finally got the kind of part I've wanted my whole life," he said. "I like [characters] with more edge, but I'm realistic in the fact that I'm not going to get many opportunities to do that."

Scott Caan, who played Baldwin's lackey, doesn't have Prinze's image problem — he has a recurring role in the "Ocean's 11" franchise.

"Filming in Brooklyn was great," he said. "Michael knows the value of making a movie about somewhere and having it be in that town. ... They were talking about shooting it in Canada and that was a huge turn-off."

Angry, absent Alec

It was the voiceless heard 'round the world: actor Alec Baldwin — who didn't show up to his "Brooklyn Rules" press junket — calling his 11-year-old daughter Ireland a "tude, thoughtless pig" when she missed a scheduled phone call.

But even though Baldwin was widely vilified, his "Brooklyn Rules" director and co-stars — all of whom have plenty of experience with bad parents — were eager to talk and lend support to their colleague.

"I think it's hard enough to be a parent, and to have it be that public is just disgusting to me," said co-star Freddie Prinze, Jr., the son of actor Freddie Prinze, who committed suicide in 1977, one year after "Ju-nie" was born.

On the set, "[Baldwin] was nothing but a professional," coed



Prinze. "I would work with that guy any day of the week and I would do anything he asked me to do." Prinze co-star Scott Caan — son of actor James Caan and Sheila Ryan, the second of his four ex-wives — also shrugged off Baldwin's temper tantrum: "People make mistakes," Caan told GO Brooklyn. "My father told me if I put my elbows on the table, he would stick a fork in my leg. You know what I mean? He never put the fork in my leg. It's not easy being a parent."

Director Michael Corrente chimed in with his own loving memory: "My father? Oh, my God! Are you kidding me? My father once said, 'Michael, go ahead, hit your sister one more time and I will rip your arm off and beat you with the wet end. Now pass the salt.' We'd take Alec over that any day!"

— Karen Butler

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DANCE

Let's dance

What's a birthday — especially a 30th — without a party? DanceAfrica doesn't want to know.

Beginning May 25, the troupe will celebrate with "DanceAfrica: Remember! Honor! Respect! An African Dance Odyssey" at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. There's a whole lot more than just dance going on that weekend, though.



the celebration will include film, sculpture, crafts, poetry readings, storytelling and more.

"It's more than just sitting in your seat," DanceAfrica Artistic Director Chuck Davis told

GO Brooklyn. "It's a celebration. That's what I love about DanceAfrica. It's a community event that allows people from all over the world to come together to share in this hands-on performance."

"DanceAfrica: Remember! Honor! Respect! An African Dance Odyssey" will be performed on May 25 at 7:30 pm May 26 and 27 at 2 pm at the BAM Howard Gilman Opera House (30 Lafayette Ave., at Ashland Place in Fort Greene). Tickets are \$20-\$45. For information, call (718) 636-4100 or visit www.bam.org.

— Sarah McCormick

ART

Get 'Lucky'

For a city full of artists whose bedrooms double as studios, the 250-square-foot Lucky Gallery in Red Hook is a kindred spirit.

"I think it's really a great size," said Ed Rosko, the local artist who recently opened the gallery. "I personally like smaller works, which is what the gallery is best suited for."

The current exhibit, "A Lucky Find," features the works of Justin Waldstein (pictured) and David Wallace. Both artists have a background in graphic design, which is especially evident in Wallace's psychedelic, '60s pop-culture-influenced works.

The works start at \$500, but Rosko said he's in it for the love of the game.

"At this point I'm not as concerned with making money as I am with displaying art." Sounds like you can make a purchase and still afford your own small spaces.

"A Lucky Find" is currently hanging at Lucky Gallery (176 Richard St. at Volokost Street in Red Hook). An opening party will be held on May 25. For information, call (718) 852-9232. — John N. Barclay

EVENT

Torah-thon

Most students are familiar with pulling all-nighters during finals week — and students of the Torah are no different during Shavuot. A Jewish holiday celebrating the day observant Jews believe the Law was passed down from Mt. Sinai, Shavuot is traditionally marked by staying up through the night to read the holy books.

This year's "Torah-thon" falls on Tuesday, May 22.

The explanation for the all-night sounds like a joke: "The morning that the Torah was given, they slept in," according to Rabbi Simcha Weinstein (pictured) of the Pratt Institute.

Not to say that Shavuot is as boring as poring over a textbook. "We make it fun," said Weinstein, who will be a guest speaker at Congregation B'nai Abraham's all-nighter.

Shavuot service begins at 7:45 pm; dairy dinner (\$30, \$10 children) at 9 pm; Torah-thon (free) at 11:30 pm, at Congregation B'nai Abraham (117 Bormen St. between Henry and Clinton streets, Brooklyn Heights). For dinner reservation, call (718) 596-8840 ext 18, or visit www.bnaiahambrooklynheights.com.

Service begins at 7:45 pm; dairy dinner (\$25, \$12 children) at 9 pm, followed by Torah-thon (free), at Park Slope's Congregation B'nai Jacob (401 Ninth St. between Sixth and Seventh avenues). For dinner reservation, call (718) 832-1266. — Harry Cheadle

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Chic pear: Gamal Bakhoun, above, brings Middle Eastern tapas like his falafel plate, at left, to the Columbia Street Waterfront District with Mazzat.

Turkish delights

Head to the waterfront for great meals at Mazzat

By Tina Barry
for The Brooklyn Paper

Whether you may be at war in the Middle East, but Brooklyn diners have no issues with its cuisine.

On Fifth Avenue in Park Slope, two Turkish eateries opened within weeks of one another, and Miriam, the Fifth Avenue eatery where chef Rafail Hasid plies his creative Israeli fare, has spawned a second outpost in Cobble Hill. The excellent Fez Restaurant, opened a year ago in Windsor Terrace, and in November, Gamal Bakhoun brought Mazzat to the Columbia Street Waterfront District.

Not far from mega-market Fairway, Bakhoun (who also owns two branches of Cafe Rakka in the East Village) gutted an old warehouse and transformed it into an attractive, informal space. The only accoutrements that signal a Middle Eastern eatery are the black-and-white photos of his homeland on the brick walls.

As a way of differentiating his eatery from the rest of the Middle Eastern newcomers, Bakhoun refers to the restaurant as a "Mediterranean kitchen."

DINING

Mazzat (208 Columbia St., between Sackett and Union streets in the Columbia Street Waterfront District) accepts American Express, MasterCard and Visa. Entrees: \$2-\$17. The restaurant serves lunch and dinner daily. Brunch is available on weekends from noon to five p.m. Subway: F, G to Carroll Street. For information, call (718) 852-1652.

Among the long list of "tapas" are a few dishes to support that description: chorizo and andouille sausages and foie gras with fig compote to name two. "Sauce verte" (a cold, green mayonnaise-based sauce flavored with herbs) appears in one of the "specialties of the house." The rest of the plates don't stray far from the Middle East.

After settling in the front room, we ordered wine from the affordable wine list — there's a satisfying Pinot Grigio for \$7 a glass, \$26 for the bottle — avoiding the over-wrought cocktails. Not long after, a basket of warm, smoky, grilled pita bread with a dish of tangy yogurt sauce appeared. We dipped and nibbled while perusing the tapas.

Mazzat, which means "many appetizers" in Arabic, is the ideal place to make a meal of several small plates. There are traditional Middle Eastern hors d'oeuvres such as stuffed grape leaves and tabbouli (a parsley salad made with cracked wheat). Hummus and baba ghanouj can be ordered in "classic," "cumin" or "hot pepper" varieties. We tried both spreads in their "classic" mode and they were well-seasoned, the hummus smooth with a small puddle of good olive oil in its center; the baba ghanouj rich with the smoke of the grilled vegetable.

I've endured some dismal falafel recently, so Mazzat's moist, crunchy and highly spiced version was appreciated. So were two dishes of Mediterranean origin: dates wrapped in bacon, and scallops prepared the same way. I loved the contrast of the salty, crisp pork and the sweet, chewy fruit. The scallops' partner, though, overwhelmed the seafood's delicate nature.

"Sautéed garlic shrimp" was presented with little adornment, as most of the dishes at Mazzat are plated. Several plump crustaceans, cooked until just tender, sat in a small oval dish of garlic-

perfumed olive oil. So simple — just the two ingredients playing off one another — and so enjoyable.

Everyone at my table was pleased with his entree, but my "Alexandria style" grilled sea bass elicited glares of envy. It was a beauty: an entire fish is soaked in a garlicky marinade then lightly crumbed with whole wheat bread crumbs. It arrived crusty, nearly black and practically smoking. Beside the chony knockout was a pile of "Egyptian rice," a long-grained rice mixed with thin whole wheat noodles that could be bland, but was just right here.

A chicken shish kebab was tender and smoky, though not as impressive as the lamb version. The grill charred the edges of the musky meat and amplified the flavors of allspice, black pepper and mustard seeds that seasoned it.

Unlike the finales in some Middle Eastern cafes, where overly sweet, store-bought pastry is the rule, Bakhoun bakes the baklava here himself. The phyllo is crisp and resilient of fresh butter, the pistachio nuts retain their crunch and the sugar syrup he employs makes the little diamonds less cloying than those baked with honey. With the pastry I downed a cup of Turkish coffee so thick it poured like mud from the little copper pot. The drink is bitter in the pleasant way espresso can be, with a touch of cardamom softening any rough edges.

On a recent Saturday night, a few locals sat at the bar chatting with the well-known Bakhoun. A couple of large tables were filled with families eating and chatting, reluctant to leave. I looked at the empty dishes on our table and the satisfied faces of my friends and I remembered that '60s saying, "Make love not war." It seemed fitting.

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The Brooklyn Paper / David Kasper

Team spirit

The real dish on Spirito, the hottest new plate in the Slope

By Tina Barry
for The Brooklyn Paper

When two successful restaurateurs and a professional DJ wanted to open a neighborhood spot to serve the Italian food they love, there was only one thing missing: a chef.

Mariano Franzese, Giovanni Cavaggia and Pierluigi Palazzo met 10 years ago when they were fathers of infants born about a month apart. The East Village dubs became fast friends and, as years passed, their respective careers took off: Franzese founded Turntables on the Hudson and worked as a DJ in clubs throughout the city; Cavaggia and Palazzo became restaurateurs; Cavaggia co-owned Gradisca in the West Village; Palazzo owns Gnocco and Perbacco in the East Village.

While their kids played, the men tossed around the idea of joining forces and launching a spot that "didn't serve fettuccine Alfredo and veal Parmesan," Franzese told GO Brooklyn. They imagined a place where diners could find the simple dishes that the men remembered from home.

"We're all from different regions of the country," said Franzese. "I'm from

Naples; Giovanni, our 'wine guy,' comes from Rome; Luigi is from Puglia, near the heel of the boot. We missed food the way it was prepared there."

Their talk was never more than that until a long time friend, the Venice-born chef Claudio Cristofoli, showed an interest.

"When Claudio came on board, that's when we started putting it together," said Franzese. Cristofoli is the executive chef

at the trendy Soho boite Downtown Cipriani (he's in the kitchen at lunch service) — one of several Cipriani, the Venice branch is recognized as the home of the "Belini," a cocktail

made with sparkling wine and peach liquor.

With rents in their East Village neighborhood skyrocketing, the newly formed supergroup turned to Brooklyn to house their restaurant.

"We looked in Park Slope," said Franzese, "and we really liked what we saw there." The spot they chose for Spirito Ristorante sits between a McDonald's and a nail salon in the high-traffic space that most recently housed Futura Bistrot Modern. The block between Fourth and Fifth avenues isn't the most enticing street in the area, but



The Brooklyn Paper / Gregory F. Ruffalo

Italian stallions: Above from left, Mario Franzese, Claudio Cristofoli and Giovanni Cavaggia, dreamed of serving dishes like grilled swordfish with red beets and balsamic sauce, at left, at Spirito, their new Italian bistro.

Franzese said he wasn't worried.

"The location seemed just right," he said. Spirito opened in late April. "We wanted something small and cute," Franzese explained. Smallish it might be — the dining area seats 35; the terrace 25; and when the garden in the back of the eatery opens next month, there will be room for 40 more — "cute" though, doesn't do the decor justice.

Spirito's chocolate-brown awning, with the eatery's name printed in gold, signals an elegant addition to the block. Gaze through the long windows, opened wide on a recent evening, into a long, high-ceilinged room. Dark wooden tables and a rich mahogany bar, brick walls and modern glass chandeliers create a handsome setting. Up a flight of wooden stairs is a lovely room with a glass ceiling. On warm nights, the "walks" made of plastic and fabric, can be rolled up creating an outdoor, sky-lit space.

"It was raining one night and it was gorgeous up there with the water running down the skylight," said Franzese.

Cristofoli's opening menu is an amalgamation of the dishes the partners longed for when they first imagined their eatery. From the chef's sea-bound region there is "Fritto Misto" (mixed fry in Italian) the brittle, crisply fried pieces of calamari and slices of artichokes to be dipped in spicy tomato sauce. There are simple appetizers ("primis" in Italian) like oversized rigatoni with seafood in fisherman's sauce, and "Bucatini All' Amatriciana," the classic Roman dish of large spaghetti with tangy tomato sauce flavored with pancetta.

Entrées ("secondas") typify the kind of satisfying cuisine the partners dreamed of serving, especially the simple plate of Cornish game hens grilled with rosemary and served with a light lemon sauce.

Franzese is pleased with the reception the restaurant has received and is so enamored with the diners, that he's considering abandoning the East Village for Brooklyn. "The kids are older now. I'm looking for a house."

He sounds like a native already.

Samantha Fromm.

Choreographer Stacy Moschetti Smith and director Matt Schickler should get the credit for the style and zing of this production, and for keeping the cast grounded in the reality of the relationships while providing endless invention in comedy bits and telling pieces of behavior.

Standouts in this regard are Allison Guinn as a dippy gangster's moll and Patrick Field as a deadpan bodyguard. They are the yin and yang of this production, creating comedy together and confirming the signature line from the song "Trust Me": "All you have to do for the dream to come true is go out there and be what you are, and we'll make you a world famous star!"

THEATER

"Victor/Victoria," will run at the Gallery Players (199 14th St., between Fourth and Fifth avenues) through May 27. Tickets are \$18, \$14 for seniors and children under 12. For information, visit www.galleryplayers.com.

whose brainstorm — presenting Victoria as Victor, a Polish count slumming as a fabulous drag performer — takes the cabaret world by storm. John Blylock's droll manner and lived-in face as Toddy provides a perfect foil to Christine Paterson's dulcet voice and sincere enthusiasm as Victoria.

The real star in this production, though, is the company of actors and dancers that plays supporting roles as various Parisian types and moves with agility and zest while doing the can-can and the Charleston or taking swings and dodging chairs in the slapstick fight scenes. Each actor's eyes are alive with enjoyment and a sense of fun coming around Michael Kern's versatile set in charming costumes by

It's no drag

Gallery Players' 'Victor' is victorious

By Christopher Murray
for The Brooklyn Paper

"Victor/Victoria," the Blake Edwards film that starred Julie Andrews, Robert Preston and James Garner, remains beloved for its cross-pollination of zany hijinks and charming songs charged with contemporary sexual politics and gender bending.

The musical version of the film is being presented with panache by the stalwart Gallery Players in its first New

York revival since the original Broadway run ended almost exactly 10 years ago. Ostensibly about the complexities of love, the current production reveals the show more as a celebration of friendship. The juice, abundantly provided here by a cast with ample energy and style, comes from the connection and conflict between pals.

Victoria Grant — an unemployed chanteuse down and out in Paris — is transformed by her new best buddy, Toddy (a gay song-and-dance man),

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CORRECTION

In our May 5 edition, we incorrectly rendered the name of Winston Churchill's mother, Jenny Jerome. GO Brooklyn regrets the error.



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Too much on Smartmom's plate

SMARTMOM FEELS like her life is spinning out of control. She's vastly over-committed and finds that she has less and less time to do the things she really wants to do.

Many of her friends feel exactly the same way. Mrs. Kravitz juggles a busy job as parent coordinator at a local elementary school with her involvement at Old First Reformed Church. On top of that, there's her children's complicated after-school schedule of piano lessons, tutoring, Brownie meetings, Irish step dancing classes, and play dates.

week on a whim while shopping for a cocktail to replace her dearly departed one. Birds are fairly easy, but this toy poodle is a handful, even though she only weighs a single pound.

The little poodle had a seizure last week, and Divorce Diva had to race to Animal Kind on Seventh Avenue.

The poodle recovered after spending the night hooked up to an IV, which was a good thing because it gave DD a chance to take a breath.

Then there's Mrs. Cleavage, who's a regular perpetual-motion machine. She's single, unemployed, and can no longer afford to live in Park Slope, so she lives in East New York and commutes with her son to PS 321 every morning.

Then it's off to the big city for a temp job and back again to the Slope to pick up her son after school. In her copious amounts of free time, she sends out cover letters and resumes, looks for a new apartment, writes her blog, Mrs. Cleavage's Diary, and attends to her own personal writing.

It's enough to make anyone want to take a nap. So you see, Smartmom is in good company when she says that her life is out of control.

Last week, over moonlight at Black Pearl, another busy friend suggested that Smart-

KIDS THE TEENS SCHOOL Brooklyn Paper CAMPS STYLE PARENT MUSIC



By Louise Crawford

Add to that getting dinner on the table, cleaning the house, dealing with her son's severe allergies and being a great friend to many people — her life is like a speeded up ride on the Cyclone.

Divorce Diva is breathless with all that she's got going on. In addition to her daughter's busy school and after-school schedule, Divorce Diva is a freelance magazine writer with a business to run, who is also in training to become a personal coach.

And if that wasn't enough, she bought a toy poodle last

mom make a list of everything she's doing.

IT WAS AN INTERESTING exercise. After compiling the entire list, Smartmom understood why she feels like Sybil (it's not the multiple personality disorder, but simply that she's trying to fit a whole lot of life into that small, overweight body of hers).

So what could be eliminated from the list? Not much it turns out.

• She must remain a good mother to Teen Spirit and the Oh So Feisty One and be there for them when they need her.

• She must remain a good wife and friend to Hepcat and give him the love and support he needs.

• She has to work to pay the bills, oversee the family's finances, and take care of her home (at least, nominally).

• She has to be a good daughter, sister, aunt, friend, and member of her extended family.

• She has to honor her creative side and work on her novel, her column, her blog, which are all parts of her life that give her great satisfaction.

There are plenty of things that sound expendable, but on further review, aren't.

• She wants to keep organizing Brooklyn Reading Works, a monthly reading series for the Old Stone House.

• She wants to stay involved with Blogfest, an annual gathering of bloggers.

• She really should keep participating in her weekly writer's group.

• She really should keep co-edting Pandemonium, PS 321's poetry magazine but she's under doctor's orders not to do it next year.

• And how could she bail on helping to organize Stoopends, a celebration of the summer solstice in Park Slope on June 23?

• And she wants to keep doing her monthly work-shift at the Food Co-op.

Whoa. No wonder she's has no time to meditate, to exercise, to read, to run in the Park, to have a mammogram, to catch a show at the Brooklyn Museum.

Buddha knows that Smartmom is spreading herself a bit too thin. And she's learned the hard way that doing too much can really backfire.

She screws up. She forgets meetings; she lands in her Smartmom column late, and Dumb Editor gets mean (Dumb Editor note: "mean" is a subjective term).

She neglects her other responsibilities. She's out of shape. She's not taking good care of herself.

Yet she has no problem seeing when her friends take on too much or say "yes" when

they should be saying "no."

She told Divorce Diva that getting that little toy poodle might put her over the edge.

She warned Mrs. Kravitz that becoming a church elder might be pushing the envelope.

She job with the looney-tunes producer might put her life into a tailspin (and give her less time with Buckley).

But you can't keep a good woman down. They want to do what they want to do because they feel passionately about so many things — even if they wear themselves out in the process.

Smartmom tried to take her own advice. It is so obvious that

she needs to prune the tree of her life and prioritize. But it's not so obvious what should go.

Well, it's a tough call. Saying no isn't as easy as it sounds. Still, Smartmom may have to pass on quite a few of her activities or at least get a whole lot better at delegating. She's already found someone to replace her on the poetry magazine (Buddha bless her) and a committee of bloggers (oy vey!) wants to take over Blogfest for next year.

Now all it will take for her to get something done will be to stop going out on Seventh Avenue, stop answering her Razr, stop hanging out in the lobby at PS 321 after dropoff, stop responding to e-mail.

Maybe next year.

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FAMILY CALENDAR

SATURDAY, MAY 19
CHOCOLATE CHIP CHAMBER MUSIC
Performance, plus cupcake decorating, painting, and more fun. 10 am-12:30 pm. Old First Reformed Church (126 Seventh Ave., at Carroll Street), adults \$6, kids \$3.62/4.

BOOK TALK: Children's author Doreen Cronin and illustrator Scott Menchin invite toddlers to hop, leap, bounce and bounce during a reading of their book, "Bounce." 3 pm. Barnes & Noble (267 Seventh Ave., at Fifth Street), free. (718) 832-9066. Free.

BAKE: Make a strawberry shortcake at this baking lesson. 6:30-8:30 pm. One Girl Cookies (88 Dean St., at Smith Street), \$45 per person. Call (212) 675-4996 for reservations.

SUNDAY, MAY 20
DANCE AFRICA: Family workshop for children, ages 8 to 16 years, and adults. \$8.55 kids. Noon to 1:30 pm. BAM Hoffman Arts Studio, 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 636-4130.

BROOKLYN MUSEUM: Tours are invited to learn about the museum's permanent collections and present a performance in response to the special exhibition "Global Feminisms." \$8. \$4 for seniors and students; free for members and for children under 12. 4 pm. 200 Eastern Pkwy. (718) 638-5000.

MONDAY, MAY 21
KIDS MOVIES: Big Movies for Little Kids presents "The Princess and the Pea." 10:30 am. 4 pm. 200 Eastern Pkwy. (718) 638-5000.

EASY PARENTING: Families First hosts a talk "Tips for Easy Parenting." Parents of infants, toddlers and preschoolers are invited to learn secrets of simple techniques that can be used. \$40. 7:15 pm to 8:15 pm. 250 Baltic St. (718) 237-1862.

SATURDAY, MAY 26
ARTY FACTS: Brooklyn Museum invites children to explore "All Your Senses." \$8. \$4 students and seniors; free to members and children 12 and under. 11 am and 2 pm. 200 Eastern Pkwy. (718) 638-5000.

— Compiled by Susan Rosenthal Jay

To list your kids event, e-mail information to calendar@brooklynpaper.com.

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OUR OPINION

On board with bikes

The wheels are finally turning in favor of bicycle riders in the city — and every pedal-powered commuter has the Bloomberg Administration to thank.

In the past six months, the mayor's Department of Transportation — which for too long treated bikers the way most motorists do (as a nuisance) — has become even more proactive in encouraging green commuting, going so far as to paint new bike lanes even in neighborhoods whose community boards had rejected them.

It happened this week in Fort Greene, and is about to happen on Ninth Street in Park Slope, a bike-friendly area whose community board has, oddly, stalled on a bike lane plan there.

Though we typically resist top-down management that shuts aside local planning boards, we applaud the DOT's drive for bike safety. (It's not for nothing that our bike-commuting editor has a file in his computer labeled "My obi" — to be run in the event of his demise on the roads.)

The good news is that the statistics bear out the agency's aggressive push for more bike lanes.

In the decade from 1996 to 2005, 225 bike riders were killed in crashes on city streets — yet only one death occurred on a street with a bike lane. No wonder the agency plans to lay down 50 miles of new bike lanes every year from now until 2010.

A recent survey compiled by the Department of City Planning showed that virtually all pedal-pushers support more bike lanes — and that the majority of non-bikers would bike to work if only the roads were safer.

Encouraging bicycle commuting is a crucial part of the mayor's PlaNYC 2030 plan — the visionary strategy for dealing with an expected influx of one million more residents (and their cars) in just over two decades.

Judge Phillips is free

AFTER LAST WEEK'S GUEST viewpoint about the six-year odyssey of retired judge John Phillips, our readers will no doubt be pleased to see our front page story that the re-

spected jurist has finally been freed.

But this story is not over yet.

Phillips was declared mentally incompetent and committed to the care of court-appointed guardians in a process initiated by District Attorney Charles Hynes. The DA claimed he wanted to protect the aging judge — who once ran against him for the top prosecutor job — from those who would pilfer his multi-million-dollar real-estate fortune.

That is exactly what happened anyway — yet Hynes has not brought charges against any of the people who were supposed to be protecting Phillips, not even Phillips's legal guardian Emami Taylor, who recently admitted that she took almost \$200,000 from the retired judge.

Many have questioned whether Hynes was really trying to protect Phillips or merely having his political rival taken out of the picture. To counter that impression, Hynes must move against the guardians who ruined Phillips's life.

This case is not over.

ALL DRAWN OUT



LETTERS

Tolls on bridges do job of 'congestion pricing'

To the editor,

There's no "ambivalence" about my ardor for congestion pricing, as suggested in your story, "Taking its toll" (April 28).

Brian Ketchum and I have been vociferous advocates of the idea since he made it a key strategy of his pioneering 1973 Clean Air plan (which became federal law).

My comment to your reporter was that the mayor made such a strong and eloquent case for the fees that we should just install EZPass on the bridges. It could be done quickly and send a clear signal to drivers that there was no gain in driving out of their way to a free bridge. Such a plan would be easier to operate than the proposed multiple checkpoints in Manhattan, producing much more revenue for transit — a chief benefit of congestion charges.

The reporter asked if such a scheme would be unfair to Brooklyn residents, and she quoted me correctly as saying, "Brooklyn and Queens residents would benefit very greatly by getting rid of the congestion that fans out from the bridges and is messing up the quality of life."

Drivers benefit most of all from faster travel. After all, \$8 a day is what drivers who stuff meters on Brooklyn streets are willing to pay. It's what two people going shopping in Manhattan would pay for MetroCard fares. Why should one group of people going to Manhattan pay nothing when everyone but pedestrians and cyclists pay something?

In fact, drivers are costing all the rest of us

an estimated \$30 a trip in the hidden, but real, costs of congestion in everything we buy, in wasted time, in accident and health costs that are not reimbursed, to say nothing of defending our foreign oil supplies.

Yes, \$8 is a bargain for all.

Carolyn Kanheim, Boerum Hill

The writer and her partner Brian Ketchum are transportation consultants.

IKEA responds

To the editor,

Your recent story on retail development in Red Hook ("Not just Ikea: Red Hook waterfront could become big box Mecca," May 4, 2007) was not only factually inaccurate, but crossed an unfortunate line from reporting news to reporting rumors.

When contacted for this story, we made it perfectly clear that IKEA had absolutely no development plans for the outparcels on our property at this time. We're not sure how much more definitive we could be. Indeed, the quote attributed to me in the article could not have been clearer: "...we are focused solely on building and opening our store."

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In fact, drivers are costing all the rest of us

MORE ONLINE
BROOKLYNPAPER.COM
Readers sound off on a plan to put an Arabic school inside a public school in Boerum Hill.

than an unconfirmed tip from an unnamed source, because this tidbit of gossip resulted in a provocative headline and story. Additionally, I was dismayed by the inclusion of a completely unrelated and out-of-context comment I made to a trade publication two years ago about another retail establishment that happened to locate by one of our stores in another state.

IKEA always has sought to keep our Brooklyn neighbors updated and informed about our project's progress, and we will continue to do so. We hope The Brooklyn Paper will strive for more accuracy as it attempts to do so as well.

Joseph Roth, Conshohocken, PA

The writer is a spokesman for IKEA. Editor's note: As Roth pointed out, he was quoted accurately. Our story reported what our Red Hook source told us — that IKEA well, at some point, envisions to open over the "outparcels."

Simcha, times two

To the editor,

As a homeowner and owner of a 16-unit

building, I think I have the right to say that you cannot throw your litter on my property ("Law would destroy my livelihood," The Brooklyn Angle, May 5).

Councilman Simcha Felder's bill would allow building owners to block you and other litterbugs from dropping your newspaper on my stop. Your columnist asked, "But what about renters who live in a 40-unit building? Suppose their building owner puts up one of Simcha's Anti-Solicitation Signs? Just because the building owner is tired of cleaning up circulars doesn't mean that residents should be denied their right to consume legitimate advertising or news."

Oh, yeah? Well, the answer is very simple: PAY FOR A STAMP AND MAIL YOUR PAPER TO THEM! There is no First Amendment issue here.

J.J., neighborhood withheld
Editor's note: The First Amendment issue that columnist Carol Kretzman raised is raised proven by the letter. Under Felder's bill, building owners would be given the right to block readers from acquiring many different types of Constitutionally protected speech.

To the editor,

Felder isn't thinking this issue through properly. The fault is not the occasional litterer — it's the overzealous Sanitation Department inspectors.

Why do they harass people with tickets for a small piece of paper? Don't they realize that, in New York City, no one can control every piece of paper?

Felder should tell the Sanitation Department to call off the dogs — and if that doesn't work, he should visit Mayor Bloomberg.

One other thought: What if one of Felder's "no solicitation" signs are found littering his mother's front yard?

Would who get a ticket in that case?

Name withheld, Borough Park

ment to call off the dogs — and if that doesn't work, he should visit Mayor Bloomberg.

One other thought: What if one of Felder's "no solicitation" signs are found littering his mother's front yard?

Would who get a ticket in that case?

Name withheld, Borough Park

Colton bagged

To the editor,

Assemblyman William Colton would like to ban plastic bags, stating that petroleum is released into our waters when bags decompose ("Pol says ban bags," April 14). What about heavy-duty trash bags and all of our other plastics?

I bring several canvas bags to the supermarket to carry my groceries home. Cashiers are often surprised, but happy that I'm helping to pack. Others have scoffed, saying my effort won't help.

I am dismayed when others feel uncomfortable by my small actions to reduce waste. I do not preach when I shop. I try to keep it personal (so others won't feel judged) by saying that I don't want to waste bags. But I do "preach" in the school where I work, encouraging my students to use the paper/metal/plastic recycling containers in my room.

Though we cannot help being consumers (in the biological sense of the word), there are still ways we can reduce our effect on our environment. **Rosemarie Bugenig, Gravesend**

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